


Inside Front

"Leading Cause of Injury and Death to Young People"

Issue Number 12,
May 1999



Featuring a
Requiem for
Refused, an 11-
song 6" Record
by Finland's
Ümlaut, and

all the
**Passion
& Fury**
of Hardcore Punk.

Introduction

Introduction by the Editor: October 7, 1998

The final Refused show, in Harrisonburg, Virginia, on October 5th.

It's probably best I write about this while the stamp is still on my hand and the emotions still smoldering in my heart. A couple days ago I went to see Refused, probably my favorite band right now, play their final show in some godforsaken town in northern Virginia.

I saw Refused play for the first time in Belgium last May. It was my 24th birthday. The experience left me shocked and transformed in every way. For the months that had led up to that night, I had felt increasingly desperate. It was a quiet desperation, difficult to place, the kind of desperation a man feels when his heart yearns for new horizons but his mind cannot imagine where they could possibly lie. I wasn't sure what was missing; I couldn't even be sure, when it came down to it, that anything was missing at all, until that night.

I had enjoyed some of their recorded music in a polite, disinterested way before then, and I expected to enjoy their show in the same way. So I was absolutely unprepared when they stepped onstage and hit me with everything I had been missing, everything I had been longing for all those months. All the passion, all the danger and daring and innovation that I had wanted and lacked in my life was there in front of me in their performance. Midway through it, when they played their anthem "Rather Be Dead" ("I'd rather be dead than alive by your oppression... *but I'd rather be alive*") I started crying. To see so many new possibilities I had failed to imagine, long-desired new vistas and horizons I couldn't even feel ready for or worthy of, was too much. I didn't stop for two hours afterwards.

In moments like that I feel that I am only truly experiencing life as deeply as it deserves when I have tears wet on my face. If we want to really live and feel, we need art, the most intense, unbridled art human beings can create, to keep our nerves raw, our wounds open, our hearts flush with blood. Without it we forget just how much is possible in this world, and we forget how much we want.

In the few months following that show, Refused fell apart. After eight years, the band members finally ceased to be able to agree about anything, and only a few shows into their U.S. tour they decided to break up after a couple more. The last one was to be in Harrisonburg, Virginia, and I drove up there with my friends to see it.

There are few enough beautiful things in this world already, and there is nothing harder than seeing one of them come to pieces. The atmosphere at the suburban house where the bands were playing that night was tense and melancholy. Members of Refused walked around, seemingly dazed, in varying degree of disbelief. Those of us who knew and cared about the band also felt disheartened; but we reassured ourselves that at least we would get to see them perform one more time, and perhaps this would hold us over until we found other bands or books or ideas to stimulate and inspire us.

When the police stopped by during the opening bands to harass kids about loitering and underage drinking, we didn't think much about it. It seemed like routine muscle-flexing on their part, and we all assumed that they would leave us alone to go on with our "rebellious" music as they usually do.

After the other bands were finished, Refused set up on the tiny stage in the cramped, sweaty basement. They took a few minutes to adjust every cymbal and guitar string, to make sure everything was perfect for their final show. By the time they were ready to begin, it was so crowded in front of the stage that we couldn't even move our feet.

They had just played two songs, and were only beginning to gather momentum, when the message came that the police were upstairs and had commanded us to end the show immediately. There was a great commotion as the kids who had organized the show tried to decide what to do; meanwhile, Refused conferred for an instant among themselves, and, realizing that this was their last chance to ever play a song, began "Rather Be Dead."

I was standing on the stage behind one guitar amplifier, and by the time they had reached the first verse of lyrics I could see the glow of flashlights swinging wildly in the back of the room. Three huge cops were fighting their way through the crowd. It took about a minute before they could shove through the front line of kids, pull the plugs out of the amplifiers, and silence the band. Refused hadn't even gotten to the part of the song where Dennis would have sang "...but I'd rather be alive."

Some of us were still shouting this, though, and the cops stood there on the stage, arms crossed with all the smug cruelty of ignorant power, staring us down from their position of macho authority, waiting until the shouts died down. Then they informed us that if we didn't leave immediately, we would all go to jail. The kid who lived in the house was given three \$500 fines, and one cop said he was going to talk to the landlord the next day.

Maybe this was the point at which somebody should have done something to show that all our talk about resistance and revolution isn't just bullshit. It probably wouldn't have changed anything, but it would have shown that we meant business, and it would have set an

"From now on, do not consider my death as a frustration..."

example for the younger kids at the show that hardcore really is about acting as well as talking. But no one spoke up, nothing happened. There were three pigs in that room, and one hundred angry kids who had just been screaming that they'd rather be dead than live in submission to authority. But they all filed out of the room and drove home, with only a few insulting remarks muttered among them.

I was the last one remaining in the room. I tried to speak the head cop about what was happening, as one human being to another. He lectured me about the role of the police in taking care of people and protecting them from each other, the same old fucking lies and conditioning, and when I tried to present my perspective he told me that if I didn't leave within five seconds I was going to jail. For what? "Obstruction of justice." He wasn't interested in or willing to meet me as an equal, as another person like himself. Like all cops, like all authority figures, his self-image depended upon how much fear and control he could exercise over me. At that point, I could have made a pointless but romantic gesture of individual defiance that would have caused even more problems for us that night. Instead, I turned and walked away, hoping it was because I knew I could do better things free than I could in their hands, not because I was scared of what they could do to me.

Riding away from the house that night, I cried again, but not like I had at the first Refused show I had seen. There is nothing more humiliating than bowing to those who use force over you, of watching as they strip away the things that matter most to you, and being too terrified to do anything about it. Cops are no better or different than rapists, in that they think it is right for them to act on others with force and coercion. And I cried then not just because I had gotten a little tiny taste of the rape culture our society is built on, but because we were just heading home in defeat, in complete apathy, while somewhere someone really *was* getting raped by some motherfucker with the same attitude as that cop. Somewhere someone was getting beaten, somewhere beauty was being destroyed or silenced. All around us the world was being transformed into a polluted, ugly, violent hell, and we just sat there in the van, dazed, not even registering that anything had happened or was happening at all.

When we let the authorities take things like music and free assembly away from us without a fight, we demonstrate that our fear—no, our *inertia*—is stronger than our will to live. We've given up on controlling our own lives, on choosing and pursuing our destinies. That one night wouldn't have been such a big deal if we were already really fighting against the system of power and domination on other fronts, but most of us aren't. We're content to just sing our old impotent slogans of resistance, until they tell us to stop, as they did that night... and we do stop.

We settle for this because we've come to accept the police as features of our "natural" environment, just like advertising, government, taxes, war, pollution. But none of these things is natural; they are all elements of a world that our species has created, that *we* have created. They are far from inescapable; they are *unnecessary* tragedy, and we only deserve them as long as we accept them. It is inevitable that bands that make beautiful music will break up, and lovers will fall out of love, and people will grow old and die. This is all hard enough to deal with, without the needless stupidities and atrocities that we heap on ourselves as well. That is what really breaks my heart, all the senseless, meaningless slaughter and suffering and destruction that we accept dumbly; when we could, if we chose, if we *wanted* to, take control of our lives and make things better.

I didn't get myself arrested that night because I promised myself that I would go out into the world and somehow make up for what had happened, somehow balance the scales. If there is nothing left you can do but make a symbolic, hopeless gesture against the forces that are destroying everything, make that gesture; but while you are capable of more substantial things, you should be prepared to swallow your pride and pursue them.

On the way home I asked Matt to pull over so we could all talk about what had happened. I told my friends how much it meant to me to see Refused play that night, how much I had needed it, and how crushed I was that they had been stopped once and for all by the same forces of ignorance and domination they had set out to fight. I told them that it was not enough for me to live in a world where things like that could happen without anyone even caring, that I would rather be dead myself than act like everything was cool. I begged them to swear that they wouldn't go silently back into the world after this had happened, that they would remember this night when something they wanted had been taken away. That, if they were going to go on living, they would not settle for living half-dead; that they would fight for what they wanted, and be courageous, and be beautiful.

And that goes for you, too. If you want this world to hold any music, any meaning for us at all, you'll have to be courageous, to be beautiful. That's what this magazine is about, and it's for you if that's what you want. Be creative, be alive, share every gift and every passion you have to offer, we all need all we can get... remember, Refused never got to play their last show for us.



for I will only take to the grave the regret of an unfinished song.”
—Che Guevara, in a letter to his father, upon joining the Cuban liberation army.

In a society that suppresses adventure, the only adventure is the suppression of that society.

Some of our latest attempts to spark world revolution by selling commodities:

Catharsis "Passion" CD/12": A new Catharsis full length recording, their first in two years. I almost don't dare say anything about this record. Maybe it will be the deliverance we've been waiting for, the music to lift us up out of this all too mundane world and set us all on fire... If this record can't do it, we're fucked.

CD \$10 USA/\$12 world post paid... wholesale \$6 USA/\$8
12" \$8 USA/\$10 world ppd... wholesale \$5 USA/\$7 world

Zegota "Movement in the Music" 12": Zegota and a few bands like them are the life's blood of the next generation of hardcore: their music is anthemic and soulful, cutting edge, innovative enough to sound like no other band; their lyrics are political and passionate, filled with sincerity and youthful idealism.

\$7 USA/\$9 world ppd... wholesale \$4 USA/\$6 world

Harbinger part 2: The CrimethInc. guide to seeing through the fog of modern society, to pursuing your desires and breaking free from chains of every kind.

absolutely free, in any quantity! donations welcome for postage.

Catharsis "Samsara" 2x12": Finally on vinyl with appropriately extravagant packaging. The "Samsara" album takes up three sides, the old 7" is on the fourth. Cheaper than getting both of the older CDs, still includes all the material before the new record that the band still plays. Includes instructions for making a d.i.y. record player out of a bicycle, among other inserts.

\$12 USA/\$14 world ppd... wholesale \$7 USA/\$9 world

A.T.R. #2: Political hardcore punk, hard-core punk politics. Massive and intellectual, personal and heartfelt.

send a postage donation if you can

Kilara "Southern Fried Metal" CD: The kings of southern noise. Incomparable weirdness and fury.

\$8 USA/\$10 world ppd... wholesale \$5 USA/\$7 world

Timebomb "Full Wrath of the Slave" CD: Italian, vegan straight edge, anarcho-communist black metal.

\$8 USA/\$10 world ppd... wholesale \$5 USA/\$7 world

...and some of our older ones:

Inside Front #11: 104 pages, with 13-track CD including Ire, Earthmover, Zegota, Botch, Amebix... the interviews are with Zegota and Ire, and the articles dissect the age old superstitions of moral law and hierarchical order. There's also a lengthy Amebix retrospective.

\$4 USA/\$5 world ppd... wholesale \$3 USA/\$4 world

Inside Front #10: with 7" of Swedish hardcore from Outlast, interviews with Stalingrad, Systral, and Culture, and articles about the drawbacks of capitalist economics in punk and how to survive without selling your soul to "the man."

\$4 USA/\$5 world ppd... wholesale \$2 USA/\$3 world

Inside Front #9: with 7" of Belgian hardcore by Liar, Congress, Regression, and Shortstight. Interviews with Congress and Timebomb, articles on work (what's fucked up about it) and how to do d.i.y. tours.

\$2 USA/\$4 world ppd... wholesale \$1 USA/\$2 world

"In Our Time" 12" compilation: Damad, Systral, Gehenna, Timebomb, Jesuit, Final Exit, Congress, and an insert discussing the standardization of our world under capitalism... and what to do about it.

\$8 USA/\$10 world ppd... wholesale \$5 USA/\$7 world

Gehenna "War..." CD: Universal destruction, merciless and bitter.

\$10 USA/\$12 world ppd... wholesale \$6 USA/\$8 world

Catharsis "Samsara" CD: A Pandora's box of suffering and tragedy, with hope trapped at the bottom...

\$10 USA/\$12 world ppd... wholesale \$6 USA/\$8 world

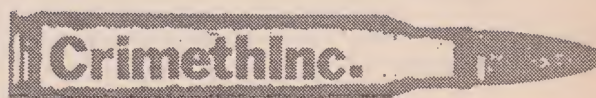
Trial "Through the Darkest Days" CD: Political straight edge hardcore. The defining Trial record.

\$10 USA/\$12 world ppd... wholesale \$6 USA/\$8 world

Next: The CrimethInc. book. Another CrimethInc. compilation. Inside Front #13. Harbinger part 3. After all that, we'll probably disappear underground for good.

Send contributions to the struggle in the form of well-hidden cash or money orders payable to "Brian D." Propaganda (pamphlets, CrimethInc. Worker Bulletins, posters, patches, stickers, etc.) is all free, of course.

CrimethInc. Freedom Fighters
2695 Rangewood Drive
Atlanta, GA 30345 U.S.A.



if you can't bear to detach yourself from your computer, read more at <http://crimethinc.cjb.net>... but we'd rather you go outside and try experiencing real life for once. And if you're supposed to go to work today, remember:

Freedom is just a bomb threat away!

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Introduction by the Editor

Ranting, raving? Emo? A call to arms?

CrimethInc. Marketing Pages

Have you noticed how common it's becoming now for labels to put out their own fake 'zines, shamelessly promoting their own bands? Real music criticism is disappearing, outmoded by this union of advertising and journalism, a match made in capitalist heaven. Is Inside Front merely the CrimethInc. equivalent of the Victory Records "Megazine"? You be the judge.

Table of Contents

(oh yes, we are very content...)

Inside Front Dead Letter Office

In which amazingly stimulating discussions of violent dancing, old school vs. new school, and other relevant topics take place.

Feature: "Reclaim the Streets"

This is the story of just one little thing that my friends and I and some other people did (just last week, at this writing) to try to shake things up a bit in our town. It's not really a big deal, but it was something, and I think it's a good example of the kind of things we need to start doing to take our ideas out of the hardcore scene and start applying them to the rest of the world. All of us exist in more than one community, and if we want better lives, it won't be enough to just make punk rock better—we have to work on our cities, our neighborhoods, our streets too.

Feature: "My Life as an Earthworm"

Kafka might have written about a man turning into a bug, but it appears that Jason is indeed an earthworm, and has been one all along.

Feature: "Radical Puppets"

In 1994 I ordered a Grounwork t-shirt from Bloodlink Records. After about five months I sent a nice letter to Scott asking where my order was. I never got a reply. Several more letters were sent and I never got a single reply, more or less my shirt. Eventually the letters just turned to death threats. This went on for years. I would periodically send Scott threats--my shirt or his life. In the Fall of 1997 I got a phone call from Scott. He apologized profusely for his behavior and promised to send the delinquent order out right away. Several months, and many phone calls, later I still didn't have my shirt. In the Spring of 1998 I finally got a package from Scott--a Chokehold t-shirt way too small to fit and a bunch of records I would never want to listen to. While Scott did put forth an honest effort to make amends it was too little too late. There is a similar story for this feature. Scott called my house several times promising me he would send the article off real soon. Well, big surprise, like the Groundwork shirt, the article never arrived.

The Fifth Column

Maximum Rock'N'Roll used to have a pretty good columns section, about a decade ago. Every writer had a theme of his/her own that was developed across the course of many issues; that was a columns section that made sense, and their writers took their columns seriously enough that they were worth reading. In today's 'zines, columns sections are usually a mishmash of disconnected ideas and poor writing, with no continuity at all. Hardcore columnists today tend to think of themselves as "personalities" rather than writers: they think it's enough to ramble about their opinions, tell a few disjointed anecdotes, and presto! they've made a composition that everyone should read. And even where this isn't the case, columns sections in political 'zines suffer from the same single-issue narrowness that plagues the American left in general: they contain information about a bunch of different, unrelated subjects, without any comprehensive analysis at all. Inside Front has a couple long-running writers going for it, but aside from them we have pretty much the same problem going with our columns, I'm afraid. Refuse to settle for it! Write us and tell us to fuck off! Or, better, offer your ideas on how to do it better...

Introduction to Situationism

We hate to turn academic and highbrow on you (I can see you rolling your eyes at me, stop that!), but unfortunately this is necessary if you're going to be able to make any sense out of an academic, highbrow band like Refused. Besides, it can be kind of fun to be academic and highbrow sometimes, at least if you're a middle class brat.

Refused: The Realization and Suppression of Hardcore Punk

A retrospective on the band that captivated all of us here. It's a little absurd to spend so many pages on one band, but this gave me the chance to discuss a lot of issues I'd wanted to address anyway... hope you guys can get something out of this.

Self Conviction/Point of No Return Interview

An interview with members of two important Brazilian hardcore bands. I think this is fucking awesome, it was great for me to read a third world perspective on hardcore imperialism, the EZLN, and similar issues. If you don't read this interview because you haven't heard of these bands, you're missing out on a lot of stuff that could broaden your perspectives and increase your awareness.

Ümlaut Interview

A reprint of their famous interview in M.R.R., plus some follow-up questions of our own.

Scene Reports

In which we try to breathe new life into an old, cliched tradition.

Reviews

Yes, records, demos, CDs, 'zines, even books, all things hardcore and consumable.

Advertising Ghetto

Letters

Inside Front Dead Letter Office

Every issue, something (or many things) goes drastically wrong here, and this issue was no exception. This time, the worst one was the notorious Black Bag incident. We spent two months together last summer traveling Europe, and at the end of that time, I parted from my friends to head south for some train-scamming and street-sleeping. I entrusted them with my Black Bag, which contained all the records I had been given for review, all the 'zines, all the books I had found in obscure corners of Sweden, all the gifts my dozens of new friends had given me to remember them by. In a matter of a couple hours it was gone, stolen easily from them by some petty thief or C.I.A. agent.

One of the things in that Bag was a letter given to me by a German hardcore kid I met, a neurobiologist interested in Krsna-"consciousness." It was a lengthy consideration of the concept of democracy and whether it was even possible in Western nations at this point. It was a really interesting letter and I'm furious that it's gone. I'd wanted to write something of my own in response to it, too, contrasting the "American politics" notion of democracy (the majority gets to dominate the minority, the two are posed as opponents) to the radical democracy that we have evolved in the punk circles I travel in (we try to come to a consensus that satisfies everyone's needs, we regard each other as comrades rather than enemies). Alas, all is lost with the letter and the other contents of the Black Bag now. This is just to serve as an apology to my friend for taking the trouble to write that letter, only to see it disappear into the black hole of CrimethInc. disaster.

-the editor

Dear Inside Front,

Hello, Brian. This concerns your review of Gehenna's CD "The War of the Sons...", specifically the description of a show you say you witnessed in Belgium. Did this shit actually happen, or was it just a ploy to get Pantera-lovin' pro-wrestling fans to buy up their CD? That is... seeing as how you're the person running CrimethInc. I recall I think from #9 reading a review, a quote, or something where Congress or some other band (aforementioned same on the 7" included with that issue) was rumored or documented as either claiming to or actually diving feet-first into people at shows at the same time as calling themselves SXE. I kind of went into denial about it, which is why I bought #10 and finally #11 I bought from Moe of Zegota when they came to Birmingham in June.

I simply won't buy any more CrimethInc. stuff until I have an answer to this query.

Signed, a non-violent SXE (the only REAL kind),
Erich Re-daction, P.O. Box 610554, Birmingham, AL 35215

Dear Erich,

First, let me address all the simple stuff in your letter. About Congress: we're not really in touch with them anymore, I guess we've sort of gone in different directions... in the interview with them you refer to, their guitarist said he supported "slamdancing, feetfirsts, and other craziness" at shows, but only if it involved "lots of consideration and respect for each other," which doesn't really sound too bad. My personal opinion about aggressive dancing like that at shows is that even if you are respectful of others as you do it, you still may intimidate them into having to watch from the back of the room (if they don't know you well enough to know that you will be careful with them), which sucks, so it can often be a bad thing. But that aside, when you consider his quote about "feetfirst" diving in context, it doesn't sound like such a big deal—considering how much stupider some hardcore kids are about the same subject... and also considering how many more important topics there are that we should be addressing besides violent dancing. I'm personally really sick of the petty controversies about that subject (and others) that have distracted us for the last twelve years of hardcore, and I wish we could move on to more important issues. [Was the "violent dancing" thing really the most worthwhile topic you found in Inside Front to think about?]

As far as your allegation that we're making stuff up to get kids to buy our CDs... That's a pretty serious accusation, considering how much of an effort we've made over the past few years to emphasize why doing things like that is bad and to avoid doing it ourselves. Nothing in this magazine is "made up," especially not to impress anyone, and for that matter we don't really care if

you buy our CDs or our magazine or not. We care very much about spreading the ideas and the music, but we don't live off fucking record sales, we have other ways of getting by. It's all the same to us if kids xerox the magazine articles or tape the CD's and copy the lyrics, as long as the material gets out there in something close to its original form. And by the way, I'm far from the only person "running CrimethInc." I do a lot of work, yeah, but it is a cooperative/collective effort involving lots of different people, and none of us really stands to make any money.

Now, the more complicated issue of hardcore and violence itself. I sort of get the impression that you've made the violence/non-violence question one of your most central standards of judgment about hardcore bands, etc. I would warn you against trying to see the world in such simple, black and white terms, in case you miss things that don't fit easily into those compartments. Violence, like I've said before, is a ridiculous way for individuals to interact in our community if this community is to be a place where people learn to support each other and interact as equals. But the question of the value of violence is far from the only question we have to face in our lives. What Gehenna did that night spoke to me on a deeper level than almost anything else I've ever experienced. It wasn't the physical violence of their performance that touched me (only childish boys who haven't gone beyond the playground pressure to be "macho" are impressed by physical violence), but the emotional expression that they achieved with it. I wrote all about that in the review, didn't you read it? Didn't it make any sense to you at all? I really tried to open up about my own feelings and struggles in that review, and it breaks my heart if you didn't see or understand any of that because you were too busy wondering whether or not Gehenna meets your pre-set requirements. I'm absolutely against violence, per se, too, as I've emphasized; but there were more important things going on there for me. I'm not demanding that you feel the same way, just asking you to try to see where I'm coming from.

If I've learned anything in my life, it is that things are complicated, that sometimes really good things and really bad things are closely tied together or even indistinguishable, and that life is almost always too complex and tangled up for generalizations like "violence is always, always bad" to be any use. Often I've found the things I needed most at the bottom of the blackest, most universally despised pits, and just as often the things I thought were safest and truest have turned out to be the most dangerous to me. Each of us is filled up with contradictions, and being a complete human being involves accepting and facing those contradictions, not simplifying everything until the really tricky, intricate stuff that makes life so unpredictable and rich just disappears.

That's why I can be opposed to violence and yet be deeply moved by a band that charges into the audience.

-the editor

Dear Inside Front Magazine,

I'm writing this letter in response to that stupid and arrogant Cleveland Kid. His letter was printed in I.F. #10. You can't imagine how sick I am of people like you yelling shit like "metal-free scene!" Don't judge people on the style they play, JUDGE THEM ON THE WORDS THEY SAY.

Hardcore has always been more than a kind of music. It's a way of life. It's about being different, about not giving in to our sick society's rules and norms, isn't it? How are we able to fight the outside world if we fight against each other? I listen to both old and new school, but I prefer new school because I don't need hundreds of bands sounding exactly the same and singing about such unimportant things as being "straight for life." Many of today's old school bands are just boring, that's my opinion. When Brian D. says, "If music is played by people in the hardcore community and is angry, passionate, genuine and powerful, then it's hardcore" he is absolutely right. You don't have to listen to new school bands, but you have to accept them as hardcore bands, cause that's what they are. More hardcore than those fascist One Life Crew pigs. They signed to Lost & Found now, that's OK. A band that no one needs on a label that no one needs. I've read an O.L.C. interview and these guys are pretty stupid. Fuck them! To you, Clevokid, and to all those old school elitists who just can't see that UNITY is the key: GO FUCK YOURSELF, YOU'RE FULL OF SHIT.

Good bye!

Yours,

Tobias

My address is Tobias Gndig / Holunderweg 3 / 53937 Gemnd / GERMANY

ONE SCENE - UNITY!!!

Dear Tobias,

The question of what is and is not "hardcore" or "punk" is a really complicated one. Everyone has their own answers that they feel really strongly about, and it's really hard to agree upon any boundaries or come up with any definitions that make any sense. And despite that, everyone is constantly arguing about it...

I've done a lot of thinking about it, and come up with an account of what "hardcore punk" is that I think works pretty well. I'm kind of proud of it, so I suppose I'll share it with you. Basically, punk is a cultural and artistic movement. The word "movement" is key, because it emphasizes the process of change that any other definition is unable to account for. When considering punk music, it's useful to compare it to other artistic movements like Surrealism. Surrealism was not one particular method of painting any more than punk is one particular way to construct songs; rather, it was a movement of artists working towards a general goal, who tried different things and learned from each other's work over a period of many decades. At any particular point in the course of the movement, there were a few styles of painting that could be called "Surrealist," but there was no one style that defined Surrealism.

Surrealism itself consisted of the series of styles that evolved among the artists who were involved across

those years. That explains how punk music could sound like the Dead Kennedys and the Bad Brains in 1981 and like H's Hero Is Gone and Zegota now: these bands are punk bands not because they have mohawks or play two-minute three-chord songs, but because they are all clearly part of the process of musical exploration undertaken by the members of the punk community.

When these "oldschool fans" say that the new "metal" hardcore bands aren't hardcore, they mean one of two things. They might be claiming that hardcore is not a community or a way of thinking or an artistic movement but rather a set of petty musical regulations. That definition doesn't do anything to explain why all the different styles that were called "hardcore" before Youth of Today deserved that title—and it serves the MTV media motherfuckers perfectly too, who would like to think that they can understand (and rip off) all that is punk just by listening to a couple old records. Fuck them!

Alternatively, these "oldschool fans" that you dislike so much may be trying to say (without knowing how) that they think that incorporating metal musical conventions into hardcore music is a bad idea. I can imagine how that argument could be made, but as you imply, it seems like an even worse idea to glorify the musical style of a past era of hardcore to such an extent that new experimentation and development is discouraged. That could freeze us in place until our whole movement died of stagnation.

Anyway, this is all old news by now, since I'm sure that by the time this issue comes out and is distributed both the "oldschool revival" and the "metalcore" phenomenon will be long behind us, and the new hardcore bands will all be incorporating electronic music and jazz improvisation into their songs.

-the editor

P.S. One Life Who?

[PPS. Wow, I wasn't aware that bands actually signed to Lost & Found; I thought they just discovered that they had an album out with them... Love, Gloria C.]

Dear Inside Front:

[A Different Look at an Almost Definite Thing?]

The concept of a "band" seems pretty restricting to me. Anywhere from usually 3 to 5 people (give or take a few), and always these people.

What if, instead of bands, people worked in musical collectives, containing however many people would like to participate in this communal music project. If a person would like to play drums sometimes, and sing or play the saxophone at other times, it is not only possible, but beneficial for that person to explore other avenues of expressing him- or herself. Now, it would be hard, if not impossible, for people to know all of the songs performed by the group, but there would be those songs that everyone knows and relates to, and others that only a select few would feel any connection to, which would justify playing them. (This is not to say that people can't play songs they don't feel a connection to, it's just

that songs relate more emotion when people believe in what they are communicating.)

Whereas a band might break up if two (or more) members fight, if a large enough collective was formed, it would be possible for people to continue in it, even if they dislike each other, because of the number of participants in the societal musical entity, and because the people at odds with each other would not have to be confined together (i.e.: on tour) at all. People could also leave, without regret, knowing that their exiting the group would not be pivotal in the destruction of the group. In your zine (Inside Front #11), there was an article about a song that has yet to be made, that would be so powerful that it could incite revolution in everyone who hears the song. What could be closer to finding that, than 20, 30, or even 50 people altogether who pool their creativity, to try and find that song, as opposed to 4 or 5? What could be more creatively stimulating than a number of people that don't limit themselves to playing with just one set of people (hopefully preventing a set form of song writing) or just one style of music, for that matter? A person's song writing style would not be limited to the "band's," but could venture off in whatever way desired. For myself, I go through phases of what sort of music I listen to, write, and play. So whereas a person's varying tastes in music might tear a band apart, this change could make this communal project stronger. This collective would also (hopefully) reduce, if not eliminate stagnation and monogamy/monotony associated with bands.

This idea is not something taken out of the blue, but merely an extension of what has been done in so many places for a long time, just taken to a higher level. For example, in the second wave of hardcore (late 80's, early 90's) in NYC, many of the bands had rotating members, on tours and recordings. Many members were chosen simply because of friendships, not solely their ability. If a collective were formed on such grounds; those of love, compassion, and shared beliefs and actions, then this communal music project might last long past its originators' times. This formation could have another advantage: instead of becoming close to just one or two people, you could share your life with a whole group, or at least have your choice of whom to be close with, opening up more opportunities for trust, friendship and happiness.

What could be closer to an anarchist/punk ideal? This could be nothing else but another nail in the coffin of the notion that the band members are better than those that aren't in bands. One rock and rollism that punk and hardcore could never seem to shake was the idolation of the lead singer. Many times I've found myself singing along to a song, pretending I'm the singer, not paying any attention to what I'm singing. Having constantly different singers would also force people to look past their voice, and look to the words, because the vocals would be as anonymous and ever-changing as the guitars, drums, and basses in conventional bands.

What would be more anarchistic? If this were carried out, it would take one of the most centralized

things in the anarchistic/punk rock community and decentralize it. What could be more music oriented than a collective of musicians? Give it a thought, and something might come of it.

Norm Drouillard
33 Sunset Blvd.
Brockville, Ontario
Canada K6V 3G3

Dearest Norm,

I agree with you wholeheartedly. There are a thousand different ways for people to make music together, and it is really limiting that our community focuses almost exclusively on just one, especially the most over-used one. The "four guys with guitars" paradigm is about the most predictable music cliché our culture has ever generated, and every time I see a hardcore band play I feel us laboring painfully under its constraints. It's worth remembering that this formula was created with the help of major label managing in the 1950's for the sake of making money off of the newest holders of disposable income, the teenage market. The Make-Up have a really interesting theory about the function of the 4-man band in the downsizing of Western music by corporations, which you can read in the liner notes to one of their records. To put it briefly, they suspect that major labels got tired of paying to maintain the older bands that had up to fifty members, so they created the myth of the lone genius musician... which found its epitome in the single industrial musician (Trent Reznor, for example) in the '90s.

The old jazz musicians benefitted in a thousand ways from being able to create mix-and-match bands from small armies of capable musicians. It's worth remembering that punk is NOT the only grass-roots/political music movement that has ever existed—we can learn a lot from the free jazz communes of the 1960's and a thousand other historical examples. We need to mess around with our own fixed ideas of how to make music and art, in the same way that we are reconsidering things like animal rights and gender roles... otherwise we will not be aware of just how much more is possible in our lives. New formats for the "band" are long overdue in hardcore.

There are already stirrings of people trying this. I've heard a few different bands (Ink and Dagger was one) talking about forming larger experimental collectives over the course of the past year. There have even been similar plans tossed around in CrimethInc. circles to create a band consisting of only singers, that could be as small as two people or as large as an entire audience. In the meantime, the bands who do stick to the old rules had better remember that they are up against fifty years of cliché and repetition, and every time they pick up their guitars they will have to work that much harder to bring something new and magical into the world.

We have worked hard to improve hardcore. Now it must be destroyed.
-the editor



Reclaim the Streets

Before I write about this, I'd like to go on record saying that I hate protests and demonstrations. Traditional ones, at least. Carrying signs, chanting slogans, going through the same motions the marginalized left wing did all through the '80's to no avail, all that shit drives me crazy. For one thing, everyone is so used to these methods that they no longer raise any eyebrows; "those damn hippies (/commies/weirdos/etc.) are at it again," the typical mainstream spectator thinks, and goes about his business without thinking at all about what their signs say. For another, they tend to polarize people, making at least as many enemies as converts: the whole idea of a "protest" is based on conflict, and so the people who don't relate to the protesters' ideas (or methods, or clothes) are often turned against the cause they are championing. Frequently, the people who are involved in these protests are so desperate to have the "identity" that they think their politics confers on them that they actually feel (whether they admit it or not) that they have a stake in creating us-versus-them conflicts, in order to differentiate themselves from the masses they so despise. And finally, not only are protests like this ineffective and boring (and boredom is counter-revolutionary if anything is, in a society that depends on apathy and cynicism for its very existence), but personally, they make me uncomfortable. My politics can't be summed up in a slogan: my idea of real positive social change is not a new, "radical" orthodoxy, but a community of individuals with their own complicated ideas and perspectives who figure out how to work together towards the goals they have in common. Centrally organized protests, with everyone following the rules (either of the organizers, or the pigs, or both), don't provide the space we humans need to express our own individual perspectives, to pursue our own personal goals in a group setting. A bunch of people shouting a sentence in unison smells to me of mobs, groupthink, even fascism; I want to make my own sentences, to see and hear others do the same, not to be part of one unified mass clashing with another.

In fact, I don't even like reading about that stuff in anarcho-punk magazines, or other anarchist "news" sources that blow everything out of proportion to make it seem like we really are on the verge of smashing the state. Yes, I want to know what other people are up to and how to participate, but quarantining our restless desires and rebelliousness to weekend protests (and gushy reports on them) does not a revolution make.

That's why Inside Front has concentrated largely on issues of lifestyle. You pose little threat as a weekend warrior, with your daily life (and thus all your capabilities to think, act, and produce) still at their disposal as a student or worker. But if you try to follow your dreams full time, you enter into direct conflict with the system that would keep you doing other things. You have to be a revolutionary every day, not just for special events, to make that work. The payback is greater, too, of course. And people who try to make a full life out of freedom, rather than a weekend cause, are ultimately more dependable in any struggle for change; they show up to volunteer at Food Not Bombs because they need to eat, not just to assuage their middle class guilt.

This is the same conflict going on in hardcore punk, of course. If it's just a style of music and fashion, something that we listen to at home, wear when we're not at work, or go to see on Friday nights, then it's not going to make our lives fundamentally better, no matter how much we may enjoy or even learn from it. But punk is more than that, at least in some circles. There are plenty of us who have been trying to turn it into a full-time lifestyle, to use the contacts and community that punk provides to create a sort of "underground railroad" by which to make our way to freedom from life-squandering employment and wage-slave consumerism. I know it has worked that way for me.

Still, once you've gone through the long and difficult process of reclaiming your own life and building a support community, there's still the rest of the world to contend with. If you want a full, good life, it's not enough to just be free to do what you want-you also have to live in a world where it's possible. That means like it or not, you have to think about what's going on in the world outside of punk, and how to work with people outside your community to get control over those aspects of your existence as well. And so even though I hate protests, demonstrations, and all that shit, I still think it's important for us to share our ideas with people outside our scene... and to figure out ways to take control over the environments we live in back from the police, and the property owners, and the "laws of the market." I want life to be an adventure for each of us, a wild and never-ending celebration, and it's not going to be unless we can shake off the baby-sitters and break out of the old rules and patterns.

One of the latest attempts to accomplish this I've been involved in was the "Reclaim the Streets" festival we did here in Chapel Hill, the town I've been living in off and on for years. The idea started among some of the political college kids here who had been to Europe and seen similar things done there: whole blocks of streets taken over and turned into massive, unlicensed festivals. We're lucky in Chapel Hill that we still have a

downtown area where people congregate-most cities in the U.S.A. are rotting from the inside out, their centers lifeless, abandoned for shopping malls which were in turn abandoned for strip malls. We decided to take advantage of that public space to reach the average shoppers and show them how much more interesting, how much more free that space (and any other space, not to mention their lives in general) could be, if they didn't only use it for what it was intended.

This was a big deal to me, because it was a chance to take our politics and our creativity out of the Saturday night punk show routine and really apply them, use them to recreate our world (if only for a little while, as an example). And pulling it off as a non-centralized, all-

inclusive, democratic event, where everybody did their own thing and brought their own causes and issues, was not only a way to break out of the death grip of "old politics"--it was a means of demonstrating to everyone who was present what democracy really is, how the environment we live in is created by our collective efforts... and how much better we can make it if we're a bit more ambitious.

We held endless meetings talking about how to go about it, which were fun in themselves, at least for an ex-philosophy major armchair revolutionary like me. Should we involve the media, or not? Do we want to be acting for the cameras, or for ourselves and each other? How do we avoid the trap old-fashioned protests always fell into, of separating the outsiders as passive spectators from the "activists"? What kind of games and tricks and adventures do we plan, to draw people in and broaden their perspectives at the same time? And how do we deal with the fucking pigs, whose job it is to keep anything like this from happening?

One of the first ideas we had was to invite and involve children. We tried to plan a bunch of activities for them to do if they wanted, and put up a lot of fliers announcing a "Kids' Day" on Franklin Street. Photographs of cops beating six-year-olds don't make for good press. We made plans for a lot of other activities, most of which we carried out, and I'll describe them below in a second. The general idea was for our group not to act as a central organizing committee but rather to be a catalyst to get people together and encourage them to feel free to do whatever they wanted, to unlock and unleash their desires as well as our own.

We were going to occupy all the parking spaces and the sidewalk on one side of the street, starting at noon. I had an idea to surprise everyone, which I wish had worked out: my friend Ernie has a huge, nearly dead



American car, about thirty feet long with big holes in it from rust. He inherited it from someone he knew who got her license revoked—he actually can't be caught driving either, since he has legal problems of his own, but we were going to have a friend of his drive. In the middle of the whole event, we were going to have Ernie and his friend drive the car into the middle of the intersection on Franklin, and have it "break down" right there, stopping traffic from all directions. This would enable us to move our festival into the street itself.

The best thing about this idea was that Ernie is from the rural South and is of a different social class and cultural background than all the middle class college kids from Chapel Hill—if he pretended he didn't know who we were or what we were doing, and spoke in his best Southern boy accent, the cops wouldn't be able to connect him to us at all, they'd have to think it was just some crazy coincidence. I imagine Ernie and Josh getting out of the car, kicking it and swearing in dialect as all the impatient motorists honked at them, opening the hood to look and disconnecting something (Ernie is an automechanic) so the car would be immovable—some political college kid from Critical Mass shouts "ride a bike!" at them, and they shout back "fuck you, hippie!" Since the car didn't really belong to anyone, we were just going to have them leave it there, for maximum chaos. Unfortunately Ernie was so fucking sick that day that he couldn't even get up off the couch he'd been staying on, so that scheme didn't bear fruit... at least, not this time.

We spread the word mostly through word of mouth, and we sent out some email and handed out some fliers. I went up and down the street on a few days, giving them out to civilians of all kinds and explaining to them (in pleasant, unapocalyptic terms) what we were going to do. I made a point of not using words like "demonstration," I tried to make it sound more like a nice parade or something, though I made it clear that this was an unlicensed festival, organized by the people who wanted to take part, not the authorities. The day before, a couple people painted their faces and went around town wearing sandwich boards announcing the event and giving out fliers. Despite all this, the pigs didn't seem to know it was coming until it happened. In retrospect, we should have promoted it harder than we did. We were afraid of attracting too much attention, but (as we discussed) the more people that were there, the less power the cops would have, so it would have been in our interest to risk catching their attention to attract more interest. I'm sure we could have come up with some new, creative ways to spread the word about what was going to happen through town. We should have worked harder to build up a mystique around it, so everyone would be curious and no one would dare miss it. I also think I should have fliered harder at punk shows, art openings, etc. in nearby towns, since we could have had a lot more people show up from outside Chapel Hill than we did.

At noon on the designated day, we all gathered downtown. We'd saved

the parking spaces we wanted to occupy by leaving cars parked in them overnight, and suddenly everyone unloaded their stuff and drove away, just as excited crowds started to converge on the street. Gloria and I had a big banner wrapped up in my backpack, and a few minutes before noon we went (dressed in our nicest clothes) to an expensive restaurant on a rooftop overlooking the street. We got a root beer to share and managed to snag a table on the balcony. As the noon chimes rang out, we slipped the rope out

of my backpack and tied it to the arm of her chair, and then threw the banner over the railing as the crowds gathered. At the same time, two friends of ours appeared on the rooftop opposite us, shaking sheet metal in such a way that it made a thunderous noise. Most people below couldn't see what was making the noise, but it sounded dramatic, like something really important was happening. Unfortunately for us, we had failed to realize that a banner without a weight at the bottom will just blow twisted in the wind if you hang it from a high place. The waiters at the restaurant, who gathered next to us to see what was happening below, were surprisingly accepting of our banner, once we ignored their initial attempts to get us to remove it and be polite paying customers. But we wanted to join in the action below, so soon we ran down to the street, taking our banner with us to spread out along the asphalt.

I'd stayed up the night before writing a little manifesto of my own for the event, and I stole a few hundred copies of that and some other fliers from a copy shop. A couple other people did the same thing. We gave them out to everyone who was there throughout the course of the event, everyone who was involved or watching with pleasure or confusion. I probably gave out about five hundred of the main flier I made, altogether. At the end I gave away copies of Harbinger, too, and there were people from various political groups giving out their literature, as well. It was really exciting to create a public environment like the one we have at good punk shows, where everyone has literature to give away and everyone is interested in reading it. Our literature tables have languished in the seclusion of the underground for too long, when so many average joes and janes have to suffer the same things we're pushing against.

We gave other stuff away besides fliers, of course. Food Not Bombs arranged a special meal, including the usual bagels and bread, a slew of fruits and vegetables, and even pizza. A sympathizer from the local Turkish tea house baked us about a

thousand cookies to give away, each with a little social/political/witty message rolled and stuck in the top (this was the closest we got to our original idea of making fortune cookies, in order to give out ideas in a way that would be fun and nonthreatening for everyone). Somebody got a truckload of flowers from somewhere and gave them out in bunches. Somebody else shoplifted a lot of Polaroid film from a corporate chain store; a friend of mine took photos of passers by with it, and gave them



away for free. I made stickers to go on the backs of the photos extolling the virtues of gift-giving and decrying the system which makes it so hard for us to do. There was a clothes line draped with free clothes that people had found, and a table with masks on it for people to wear, and dozens of other things collected to be given away.

My artist/musician friends all showed up with an assortment of musical instruments they had made out of pieces of metal and odd bits of wire and other things. They joined the various punks, hippies, and student types who had brought instruments of their own in a vast group improvisation. Throughout the whole event there were always at least thirty people playing music together—surprisingly good music, too. It really added to the festive air, and it was one of the most successful elements of the whole thing, because literally anybody could and did pick up a drum and join in.

That was only a fraction of what went on. There were people there on home-made double-decker bicycles, people dressed in crazy costumes, lots of people with huge puppets, including two inside an enormous zebra. Some people staged a puppet show with life-size props, and a book reading in conjunction with it. There was a sandbox, and a massage therapist with her chair and equipment giving free massages to stress-ridden employees and other unfortunates. There was chalk for people to draw on the sidewalk and street, someone set up easels with paper on them for kids and adults to draw on, there were water balloons somewhere that a friend of mine had stolen. Another friend of mine walked around with a loudspeaker alternately spouting nonsense, proclaiming radical theories, and announcing fabricated "sales" at the shops nearby. There were boom boxes blasting reggae music, a forest made of bamboo trees, banners announcing our intentions to "reclaim the streets," too many more things to even start to list them all. It was a real life free community circus, and while it was going on we were all too busy running around doing our things and soaking it all in for our feet to even touch the ground.

Gloria researched Chapel Hill history, and she went around to all the chain stores on the street, writing on the sidewalk in front of them what local businesses had once been there and when. She also made a flier with photographs of old Chapel Hill to give out, from the days when the streets were more unique and personable, less commercial. Around the pictures, there were stories of the old shops, the old people, the old Chapel Hill before the faceless chains moved in and dressed everyone in their uniforms.

There is a guy in our town who stands at intersections on weekends carrying signs that say things like "hunt the whales" and "bomb Northern Ireland." Once when we were doing Critical Mass, he was out there carrying a sign that said "ban bicycles." This guy is my hero, the most loyal opposition we could have: I can't think of a better thing for people to see when we're riding our bicycles than a man carrying a sign that says that.

He could win the whole mainstream of America over to our "side," if there were more of him! The week before the big day, we spent a few nights at my friends' house making signs, puppets, etc. In honor of my hero, who I feared might not be there, I made a sign that said "Ban the bicycle: keep Americans inside their cars," which a friend of mine held up to all the cars driving past (swerving as they attempted to read it) for much of the event. I also made a sign that said "If you're not shopping, GO HOME," and I tried

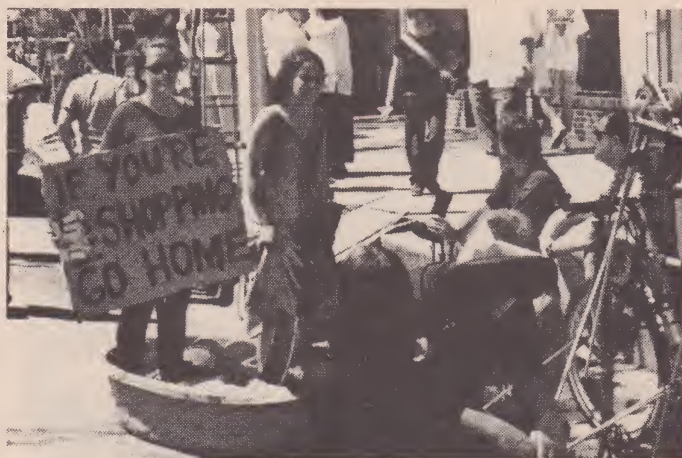
to make another one for angry drivers reading "Aim for Pedestrians," but I ran out of space, and it ended up saying "Aim for Pedestria." After a lot of swearing and hitting things, I decided that was pretty good, too, and just drew an arrow on it. I was pretty excited about my signs, but I was outdone, hands down, that day: my idol was there, standing sternly on the other side of the street, with a sign reading "My Other Car Is A Cruise Missile." Seriously, this guy is a visionary, one of the few true geniuses of our time, and I can't thank him enough for the work he is doing. Other people in our unit made signs saying things like "Smile!" and "This is your street!" and even "STOMP OUT JAZZ MUSIC NOW!", but nothing could hold a candle to his.

Of course the media didn't get it at all. Their reports all expressed confusion as to why we were there and what we hoped to accomplish. That is exactly as it should be. The people who were there and who saw us all understood what we were doing. Our fliers made it clear if nothing else did. We didn't throw it as a party for the fucking media, we didn't invite them or pose for their fucking cameras (ever notice how differently people behave when they're being filmed?). Our purpose was to reach people in the real world, to show how exciting it can be to come together in real space and time, in the flesh, not to create another fucking photographic or electronic record of ritual insubordination. Creating our own ways of reaching people, democratic ways, free ways, direct ways, that's what we were out to do: to make the media obsolete, to steal their power and give out to everyone for free. Naturally they didn't understand what we were up to, and it's a good thing, too!

Looking back, these are some of the things I think we accomplished:

1. Obviously, we brought new ideas to some people who wouldn't have encountered them before. Now, it's going to take a whole lot more than accidentally running into our festival one afternoon to radicalize a forty year old man who has never let himself question the roles and rules

of his society. But there were plenty of people there that day that I would describe as "fence sitters," people who are sympathetic to our ideas but never dare to think too hard about things or take action of any kind. We made it less intimidating for them to join us in reconsidering and reconstructing our society, by demonstrating just how much fun being critical and getting active can be. The air was buzzing the week after with people we had thought jaded and apathetic talking about how awesome the



event was and what they thought the implications were. And at the same time, we proved to each other that we don't have to keep our beliefs and ideas inside the confines of our little subcultures, as if they were something to be ashamed of.

2. There was a friend of mine there who had tried to commit suicide a couple weeks before the festival. He didn't do anything but sit quietly and look around, but he told me it was the most positive, awesome thing he'd ever seen, and for a few hours he was really happy. We were all really happy for those few hours. So many people, especially those of us who have been driven to the underground and the struggle against the status quo, are unhappy in this world, with so many controls and so much bullshit heaped on us on top of the inevitable tragedies that life holds anyway. This was a holiday from all that for each of us, a short, refreshing taste of real freedom and excitement, and it helped keep a lot of us alive, I think.

3. That day and the work leading up to it brought a lot of us closer, and created a better feeling of community among us local radical types. A lot of us knew each other vaguely but had never gotten the chance to get better acquainted, let alone do anything exciting together, and this afforded us the opportunity. A few years back I had despaired of anything exciting and revolutionary happening in Chapel Hill, but now there are enough connections between people and enough ideas and idealism in the air that the future looks good. I have a lot of friends now that I didn't have before, who have been a big help and a boon to me in a lot of ways. And it feels great to be doing stuff locally, not to accept my alienation from the place I live in (as I walk to the post office to mail off pamphlets and 'zines talking about exactly that), but to be doing something about it, and meeting other people face to face who want to as well. We can get so caught up in our international network of thinkers and activists that we forget how awesome it feels to actually have an impact on the places we spend our daily lives.

4. At first I was afraid that the largely middle class college kids who had worked hard to make this happen would think of it as the climax of all our efforts, and feel afterwards that their work was done. But it actually worked to energize everyone, to make them all more ambitious and eager to cause trouble. That evening, eating free food back at their house, everyone was talking about what we would do next. Fuck yeah.

And these are some things I hope we learned:

1. Always put weights at the end of banners to be hung from tall buildings, etc.-they won't do you any good blowing in the wind!
2. When you're giving out/posting the advance fliers, it's probably good to have a rain date chosen and listed, so if it's pouring rain and meteors that day they will know when to come out instead.
3. We could still have done a better job of involving the straights and squares, who are inevitably intimidated by anything out of the ordinary. One plan some of us had that we should have followed through on was to plant people in the crowd of passers by, dressed as old uptight men and

nervous young Southern mothers, who would interact with us according to pre-set plans. If we came up with some good skits in which they got involved in what we were doing, that might have helped other people (who identified themselves more with the straight-laced actors than with us) to feel more comfortable doing more than watching from the sidelines.

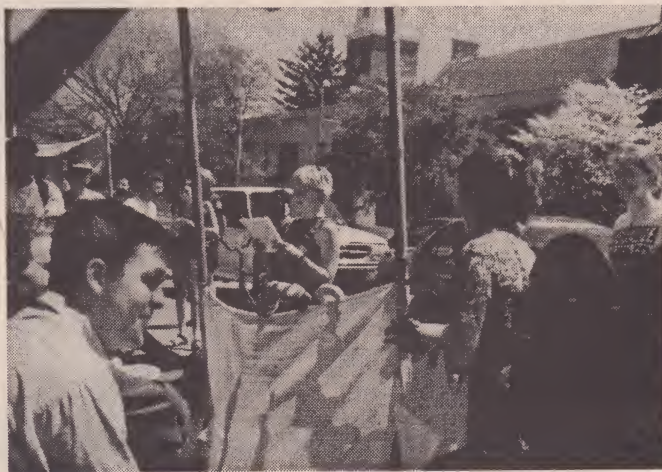
4. Police. Some of us did react to police pressure, and the whole event ended earlier than it otherwise would have or should have because of this. The cops acted really nice, but told whoever would listen to them that our "party" had to be over by a certain time. They acted nice because they knew that with so many people on Franklin Street participating in our festival, it would be useless for them to try to intervene. If you have enough people doing something, you pretty much nullify the power of the authorities, which ultimately rests on group assent (whatever their firearms may lead you to believe). What cops do is look for leaders, people who can organize

and command the masses for them... and failing that, they look for people to make examples of, so everyone else will be frightened. We should have offered them neither, and continued about our activities. When cops asked who was in charge, we should all have denied that anyone was (we did that, I think, but they still figured out that some people felt like they were responsible for what was going on, and singled out those people). When they told one of us that the event had to be over by two o'clock, he or she should have said "uh, I don't have anything to do with it, but I guess if it's over by two I'll leave." No spokesman/woman to talk to the cops--without that, they'd have to deal with us as a group of people all doing what we wanted, not a mass directed by a particular will. The other thing they might have tried, in exasperation, would be bullying us by picking on individuals (say, arresting the one person who was breaking a law nobody else was breaking). If we had all shown solidarity with whoever they singled out (join in breaking the law, make it clear that they will have to take all two hundred of us to jail with him/her, etc.), that would have made it really difficult for them to use that tactic. There's not all that much space in the local jails here...

5. Despite our attempts to avoid the whole "centralized committee" thing, we could have done better. Because we were the ones having the meetings and doing the fliering, etc., we came to think of it as our project, when the whole point of the event was to make something that

belonged to everyone. Sometimes we forgot that it was our job just to act as a catalyst, rather than to decide how, when, and whether or not the event itself was to play out. Something like this starts to really work when it no longer is one group's project but comes to belong equally to many different groups, all doing their own things with their own goals. Next time we should try to form independent cells, each with an equal say in what happens, that can work separately on plots and schemes of their own, so that we don't fall into the trap of thinking that we, the organizers, somehow "own" the event.

6. We should have thought more clearly about what would happen afterwards. We spent so much energy preparing for the actual event that we neglected to use the event itself to direct energy towards future events. We could have had more fliers, fliers inviting people to Food Not Bombs and a hundred other projects and capers we have going on here. We could



have had some even more intense happening planned for a few days later to escalate things...

Next time we do this, and we have another one planned in a few months already, we'll get the word out better and we'll have four times as many people there. We'll be ten times as organized, we'll know how to ignore the cops and stand in solidarity if they try to take any of us away. And Ernie won't be sick, he'll show up and block the street off with his car, so we can claim all the asphalt for our own. We'll have smoke bombs set up to go off up and down the street, filling it with thick fog so no one can see to drive; multicolored lights will illuminate the opaque fog, cutting out silhouettes of wild dancers and monstrous puppets, as unseen musicians pound out feral rhythms on all sides. With the limited visibility, it will seem to everyone there that the whole world has been transformed into a magical place, filled with spirits and animals and wonder. And we'll pull the fucking power lines down, so people have to come out of their offices and retail outlets for once. Once and for all, perhaps.

Welcome to *Reclaim the Streets!*

Please don't think of this as a protest "against" something. We're all gathered here most of all for the sake of *celebrating*.

This is a wonderful day to celebrate our community, to be playful and creative together, to explore what public space can be if we choose to use it.

The secret of our streets is that we can use them for *anything we want*. As long as we remember this, every day can be a festival, an adventure. Sure we're used to coming to Franklin Street just to shop or work: we park our cars with some difficulty and make our way inside to wait on customers or buy things. Maybe on the fringes of those activities we pause to hang out a bit, to exchange pleasantries with each other. After years of this, it's hard to imagine that our streets could be used for anything besides driving, working, buying. We have Apple Chill and Halloween once a year each, but it never occurs to us that we could get together to have fun like that except on the appointed dates.

What if you could design a Franklin Street of your own, a street according to your wildest dreams? Imagine all the possibilities! Would you have fountains, statues, castles? How about free horses for everyone to ride? Elephants? Public transportation of other kinds, so parking wouldn't be such a problem? Activities besides shopping, free activities, so *everyone* could take part regardless of how much money they had... so the street could truly be a place for us to come together, rather than be divided?

That street can be a reality if you want. For *we* are the ones that make Franklin Street what it is. Every day that we come here, we recreate the same patterns of life that we are used to. It's important every once in a while to take a day to do something *different*, to remind ourselves that we can make this place whatever we want it to be.

This is a flier put together and copied by one of the participants in this "Reclaim the Streets" festival, nothing more or less. There is no Reclaim the Streets central committee or spokesperson; this is a public event, made by and for whoever wants to participate, and it can be whatever you want it to be... just like everything else in your life!

This free Polaroid is brought to you by Walmartsm. We at Walmart would love to be able to share all of our products with you for free; for after all, giving is always more fun than selling! Unfortunately, in this capitalist system, since everything is for sale, it's hard to get our hands on anything that we can afford to give away. Today, we're making an exception, just to show how much better life could be if we all shared everything!



RECLAIM THE STREETS

"What's that?" you ask, and I say, "it's all in the name 'reclaim'." See, you can only reclaim what once was yours and now is not. Streets used to belong to people. Streets used to be for the movement of all, not just car movement and on-street parking. Streets used to be filled with music, open air markets, animals, children, and human noise. In short, they were alive. But now street life is dying. You know, that kind of thing that echoes like a tarnished sax on brick walls for your change. That kind of thing that looks you in the eye and says hello because it knows your name. That kind of thing that once had folks talk about "the word on the street." We have different kinds of words on our streets now. These words are not friendly words, and they don't know your name or even care. Because if you are not on the street to spend lots of money, and if you did not get to that street in a very large shiny vehicle, then maybe you don't belong there and could be getting in the way. So the words talk from telephone poles and tell you when to...

"WALK." Then they tell you when to "DON'T WALK." Don't think, don't dream, and don't talk. Don't ride that bike, don't skate on that board. Don't sleep on that bench, and haven't you been sitting there too long? Don't ask others for anything, don't put that flier there, don't loiter, linger, laugh, love, or live here! The lines are drawn. This space is for the new perfume shop, bookstores might lead to independent thought. This space is for parked cars, oh, and so is that space, and that space, and that space, and that space. This space is for car movement, and so is that lane, and that lane, and that lane. Flower ladies? That's quaint, but let's put them in this dark corner. Here are the lines you can walk within. Be careful, though, there are a lot of cars out there. Make sure you look both ways. Always look both ways. Always be afraid and be very afraid. What's that you say? A line for bicycles? I'm sorry there's no more space for you. Fend for yourself, but don't come into this space or this space or this space. Feeling claustrophobic? We'll let some steam off for you. Here's your sporting events space, here's your Halloween space, here's your Apple Chill space. You want more than that? You'll have to get a permit. OK?

No, it's not OK. In fact, it may be high time to start blurring some lines. What we're trying to say is that it's time to reclaim the street, renew the avenue, remodel the boulevard, revive the drive, rescue the causeway, rehabilitate the interstate, reshape the pavement, repurchase the bypass, reform the thoroughfare, re-own the cobblestone, retake the right-of-way, regain the lane, retake the turnpike, recoup the route, reoccupy the byway, ransom the road, recapture the cul-de-sac, restore the rotary, refashion the freeway. When streets are alive, people organize, they share ideas, they protest things. They cannot be controlled, monitored, or lulled to sleep. True street life is threatening to the status quo, to consumerism, to conformity. The lines that have been drawn seek to keep people quiet, silent, able to be manipulated. People coming together in public just for the sake of being with other people cease to be consumers, cease to be a market niche. This has become a threatening thing at the end of this millennium. And so the lines continue to be drawn. But they can't hold forever. Things are bound to bust out.



So why write about this in Inside Front? Not to glorify our own little project--I'm sure that most of you have done things twice as radical and crazy. Not to be an uptight old-fashioned leftist journal covering our own fucking protests, as if they were more important after they're turned into news. But just to share a couple ideas with you, to tell a few stories of our adventures fighting the system, in order that you might get better ideas--and outdo us in your own towns and your own lives! So much is possible if we're willing to be idealistic, ambitious, courageous. The ground you're standing on at this moment is liberated territory--defend it!

I discovered the other day that I'm really an earthworm. All these years I thought I was human, but in reality, I'm a slimy little invertebrate who crawls on his belly and has no idea where he is going. And worse than being blind, I have two brains, one at each end of my body, pushing and pulling me in and out of shit, and mercilessly distorting my well-being in the process.

I started to notice my earthworm characteristics a long time ago. At first I attributed them to psychotic human behavior, but now I understand them to be normal "night crawler" functions.

A classic earthworm activity commonly mistaken for human psychosis is the slime trail I leave wherever I go. All my life I've been able to walk into a room and immediately mess it up. It can be anywhere really. The moment I walk into the room the secretions from my earthworm body stick to anything in the surroundings, dragging them out of place with my every motion. Even if I straighten up the mess, the only way to keep my surroundings clean is to sit still; the moment I move, the slime trail starts.

Another earthworm attribute that I had mistaken for a dysfunction in the human world is my inability to see. Sure, I have eyes that look like human eyes, and sure, I'm tricked into thinking I actually have vision, but in the day-to-day problem solving needed to survive and perpetuate my species, I spend most of my time simply groping in the dark. I'm forced to feel my

way through situations and sometimes plow headfirst through some gauntlet, unable to see the extent of the task beforehand. And since I can't see where I'm going, I often have no idea where I've been. I just move through time because I'm supposed to, more aware of what I bump into than what's beyond my immediate surroundings.

Another part of my blindness stems from the fact that I choose to live underground. Sure there's no light, and there are lots of things to bump into, but the moist soil of old habits and traditions offers greater security than the bright, open expanse of the world above. I don't have to worry about finding the life-giving water of new ideas, because there is stagnant, old-idea water all around me. I don't have to worry about being stranded in the scorching sun of criticism, because the sun never gets to me. I don't have to worry about finding fresh pastures, fresh relationships in which to graze because down here there is an endless supply of nutrients from the rotting remains of many other creatures' lives. In fact, the only danger I face is drowning in my own emotional security. One really soaking rain storm, one flood of new thinking could surround me with too much water, forcing me to either surface and get air or die in the mud of indecision.

But the attribute that finally convinced me I was not human but worm is the schizophrenia of my thinking. I realized that what I believed were opposing thoughts coming from one human brain are really the arguments of two worm brains working to push or pull me in their

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separate directions. One brain tells me to move forward, to seek new dirt through which to travel. The other brain senses the ease of the tunnels I've already created and pulls me back into the nostalgia and greater security of staying in familiar paths. One brain tells me the right direction for bumping and tunneling, the other tells me to ignore what is right and instead to follow the path of least resistance, to find the easiest way to stay alive and maintain my well-being. These two brains are in constant combat, one winning one moment, the other winning the next. And as confusing as this is to me, it must be even more confusing to those around me who think I have one human brain and that the inconsistency of my actions is due to some mental imbalance.

All these behaviors that made so little sense when I thought I was human now make perfect sense. All those years of feeling like a human failure are now replaced by the realization that I'm a successful worm. All those needless frustrations of trying to better my human nature are now replaced by the joy of knowing I'm an expert in worm nature. No more schizophrenia for me. Rather than continue as a human, faced with the realization that my life needs much work, how much easier it is to simply redefine my existence to fit the attributes I already have. How much easier it is to live as a lower life form than to work at becoming fully human.

by Jason Crumer

I can be reached for any reason at: Jason Crumer/406 North Mendenhall Street/Greensboro, North Carolina, 27401/USA or Be good.

MY LIFE AS AN EARTH WORM

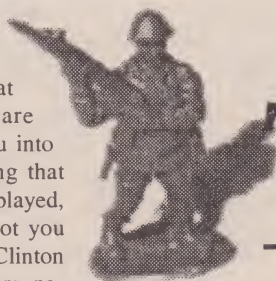
Shattering the Illusion of Perfection Or in other words...Why I Told 100,000 People That I Have Genital Herpes

By Greg Bennick

"I am incomplete
damaged and imperfect
this world is not divided
between saints and sinners
forgive me for being human..."
- TRIAL "Saints and Sinners"

I got a call from Marco Collins, DJ on Seattle's 107.7 KNDD FM sometime in mid September. Marco had seen Trial play at the Bumbershoot Festival here in Seattle at the beginning of the month and wanted us to come onto his radio show "The Young And The Restless" and talk about who we are and what we do. A bit of background to catch you up on what I am talking about: Bumbershoot is a huge festival, with about 250 bands playing on dozens of stages over four days. Bands from the level of local rock bands all the way up to R.E.M. and The Indigo Girls are invited to play this fest, and about a half a million people of all ages come out to listen, party, dance and drink cheap beer in the fleeting Seattle late summer sun. It is a fucking zoo to be honest, and other than going down there to juggle and make money off of the locals, I usually avoid it like the plague. One cool thing about it though is that tickets to the event are about \$14 and get you into ALL concerts occurring that day. On the day we played, the same \$14 ticket got you into see Beck, George Clinton and the P-Funk All Stars, poets, world music acts, and about 40 other performers! This year was the first year Trial had been asked to play, and I was actually floored. I couldn't believe they even knew we existed, let alone had any desire for us to infect their rock event with hardcore. Still, always up for a challenge and an interesting time with new all ages audiences, we agreed to play. It was the last show of our summer tour, and it was a doozy. Imagine, if you will, a full stage with concert lighting set up at the end of what is regularly a hockey rink. Full concert PA with sound tech, drum tech, guitar tech, vocal tech, stage manager...about as far from basements and rented halls as you can imagine. This stage was sponsored by Marco's employer, KNDD 107.7, the local "alternative" mainstream station in Seattle. This is a radio station which tries desperately to give an illusion that it is hip, cool and exciting...but succeeds only in coming across as boring and mundane. Over 95% of their airplay is programmed and predetermined. Can anyone say "sell-out"? It is a sad state of affairs when radio airplay is dictated by record companies. Bring on the pirate stations! Anyway...we were introduced to the stage by Marco the DJ. To our pleasure and joy (please note a hint of sarcasm), we'd discovered as we were setting up that there was a five foot high barrier about six feet in front of the stage, set up to protect us from the audience, or the audience from us...something like that. I have always thought that barriers were the stupidest things ever created. We, dear reader, as sophisticated punk rock types, know that the stage barrier is regularly used today because M-TV showed a little too much of that wacky "mosh" dancing which all the kids seem to be doing these days, and this fact, combined with the shocking occasional

"stage dive" was enough to drive concerned parents to raise hell and high water until insurance agents ran for cover. It was under that cover that they must have decided to erect barriers in front of the stage to neutralize the energy of the audience by keeping them from touching the stage or performer. Well, they did a good goddamn job, because barriers destroy all hope for interpersonal communication at shows, and effectively reduce the audiences experience to literally watching the band, rather than experiencing or communicating with the band. (In addition, as a side point - in case there are any insurance agents reading this - the barrier actually *invites* injury, as kids will be kids, and diving backfirst onto a wooden wall is not going to solve *any* injury problems. Way to go for wounding kids, you insurance morons...) Back to our story...as soon as we were introduced by Marco we took the stage under the rock lights where I promptly greeted the crowd, climbed down from the stage, walked to the barrier, climbed over it into the crowd, and we started our set. Pandemonium broke out immediately on both sides of the barrier. Trial was having a blast, I know that I was using the chance to speak to a room full of new listeners to the best possible advantage (say what you will about the myth of bands who use "we need to spread our message" as an excuse for playing non hardcore venues, but I am all for it - give me a chance to tell 500 new people about the Western Shoshone Defense Project and their DIY indigenous resistance to US government tyranny and I will take it, pretty much regardless of where it is as long as it is all-ages. And the Western Shoshone elders have told me that they agree: the basements-vs-venues debate means nothing to them.



The Fifth

People knowing that they are being systematically murdered DOES mean something however, and that is where my voice, and yours as well to tell you the truth, come in). Anyway, the point is that audience was having a great time: the Seattle regulars were dancing and "moshing" like a bunch of friggin' nutcases, and the couple hundred new people who had just walked in to see where their \$14 ticket would take them and had no idea what was going on were enjoying the spectacle too. On the other side of the barrier, the stage side, things were equally crazy. Aside from the fact that there was a guy crouched behind the barrier whose sole job was to hand me a water bottle whenever I needed it (I told him politely to go away and that I could control my own water bottle, thank you very much, but he was there for the duration. It was like having a slave, and while easy, felt *very* wrong), I heard later from the stage manager that the stage crew immediately called for an ambulance and paramedic team as soon as I climbed into the crowd at the start of the show! They must have thought I was committing suicide. Oh...just a note about the water guy in back of the barrier (the fact that he was there in the first place blows my mind to this day): about two songs into the set, I called over to the guy and asked him to get a chair (he had been crouching with my water bottle the entire time so as not to be seen by the crowd). He comes back half a song later, puts the chair down, puts my water bottle on it, and then crouches down again! What the fuck?!? He thought I wanted the water bottle to be easier to reach over the barrier and so he'd raised it up for me by putting it on the chair I had intended for him to sit on! At that point I gave up trying to help ease his workload...he was like a trained Doberman...determined to kill until the end. Go team. I can only imagine where he learned to

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suck up to bands like that. Metallica must have guys in the bathroom wiping their asses for them, if Trial has a water boy. Ugh. Ok, now that I have digressed about five light years from where I was headed, Marco Collins was really surprised by our set, because of the barrier leap for one (which he had never seen a band do before - I should have told him to check out Catharsis, as Brian would have done the same, but then applied the added bonus of growling at and spitting on the crowd), but more so because we spoke between each song about politics. That is what prompted his call to me later in the month to have us come on his show.

Marco is a great guy. I want to get that out of the way, because if I just tell you that he can fit more uses of the word "dude" into a sentence than a California surfer (or average straightedge kid) and that he talks like an M-TV VJ on crystal meth, then you might just stereotype him as normal mainstream rock DJ. The crazy thing is that while Marco might get paid to come across as normal mainstream rock DJ, he is really sincere and did have a real interest in a band with political affiliations coming onto his show. With the Marco disclaimer out of the way, I can tell you that I was terrified to do the interview on KNDD. A bit of background on that is due here: as you can tell from the title of this article, I have genital herpes. Even typing it now seems really strange and makes me remotely uncomfortable, as it isn't something I ever talked about openly before last fall, and had been my deepest secret for over eight years. The only people who ever knew, other than my sexual partners, were some close friends and family. Overall, I shrouded

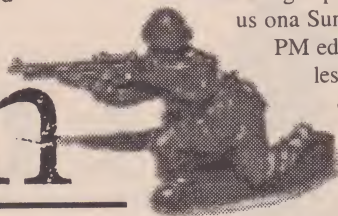
one walking by with stoic faces has their own tale of devastation to tell from somewhere deep inside. We are a culture of empty shells, screaming silently. I had harbored that inner desire to take what was for me the ultimate risk: telling people about what embarrassed me most, what scared me most, and what made me feel weakest - that I have an incurable, societally shunned virus...a virus which affects my ability to fit the male virile sex role widely accepted by the general public and portrayed on tv and in the movies. I am supposed to be smooth and collected, not afraid and unsure. I am supposed to have spontaneous sex, without regard for pregnancy or protection...condoms are still not cool you know, and actual people with STD's don't really exist, do they? Well except of course those who have the once dreaded HIV...but we Americans stopped being concerned with HIV as soon as we saw that Magic Johnson was still looking healthy when we saw him on TV, now didn't we? Fuckers, people are still dying of HIV, just not as many rich people these days, because they can afford the explosively expensive drug cocktails which allow them to walk around with their own synthetic healthy façades, rather than screaming "I AM FUCKING DYING!!!" and thus shocking the general public into action. And as for other STD's, the sterile approach to sexual education taken by conservative school systems and media outlets nationwide has undoubtedly resulted in an explosion of new cases, of which I am only one.

So, we had accepted the 107.7 invite, and I went into the interview with a vague plan. The station opened its doors to us on a Sunday night in October for the 9-11 PM edition of "The Young and the Restless". The show is a showcase of local alternative music and is one of the few shows on the station all week long which is actually broadcasted and programmed live. Imagine that, you can actually

call in and speak to a human being on the other end of the telephone! That is a rarity in this day and age of automatic answering systems and pressing one for "yes", and two for "no". Alexander Graham Bell must be spinning like a fucking dynamo in his grave. Where is "Press three to have this phone service immediately self destruct and its designers and inventors tortured eternally by sadistic secret agents." I await the day. Anyway, Timm (guitar) and I were the ones to go in and speak, and I was shaking, knowing that I wanted to somehow let my story out to the audience that night (potentially every radio in the Puget Sound area - about 2 million possible listeners, though the actual program demographic is much smaller) and that this was the biggest audience I would probably ever have a chance to reach at one time. Listening to the interview now(which I have on CD), I can hear the nervousness in my voice at the top of the show: I knew I was going to go for it, but I didn't know how or when I would do it in the 30+ minutes we had on the air.

There were a lot of people in the local punk/hardcore community who had been critical of our choice not only to play Bumbershoot, but also of our decision to go on KNDD for an interview. I knew that the media is a powerful tool, and a dangerous ally at the same time. Used correctly, it is extremely powerful. Getting used by the media however, can destroy you. While I am sure that Marco hoped to have us spout out political rhetoric on the air and give his listeners something to tell their friends about at school and work, thus increasing his fan base, I am also sure that he didn't fully understand that we actually embraced the opportunity for our own needs as well, knowing fully our own abilities in front of micro-

Column



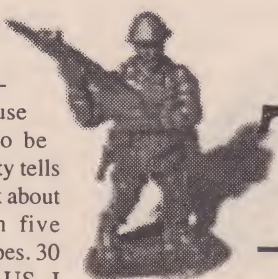
my intimate life in secrecy starting in 1991 when I got it, and regretted the rest of my life overall: all my mistakes, my body, my shattered past and my unsure future were intensified by the fact that I had fucked up and caught the herpes virus. I felt less than human, ugly, undesirable, and unable to do a goddamn thing about any of it. Whenever it came to expressing my true feelings to other people, I was entirely unable to do so. To be honest, thinking about the fact that I have herpes had consumed me for years. It was always at the forefront of my mind, but because of societal "rules" (read that as "illusions") I always felt that I would embarrass myself and degrade myself if I opened up and told people the truth about why I was upset, withdrawn and angry so often. Many friendships and relationships suffered because of this apprehension. The bottom line is this: that there was always a lurking desire in the back of my mind to break all the ridiculous rules and tell the entire fucking world about what I was experiencing. After all, who the fuck am I? Who would care about me having herpes? Millions of people have it, and why should me telling anyone else about it be interesting at all, let alone revolutionary? When Marco Collins asked us to come on the air, and I began to entertain thoughts of sharing my story, I realized that the revolutionary aspect involved in the telling of secrets, is in the telling itself. It is in the risks taken in opening up and sharing real human feelings and real human emotions - all too often suppressed and annihilated by our cultural "norms" (read that as "shackles") - rather than agreeing to adhere to the empty facades and false faces which we are 'supposed to' carry and wear every day. I think that these false faces and empty social graces are direct manifestations of terror. We fear anyone seeing our shattered inner selves, even though every-

phones, and knowing that we could use the situation to get good information out to needy people who would never have heard it otherwise. As it turns out, we were about to talk about the Western Shoshone Defense Project and also Seattle Rape Relief at length. We alternated for awhile, with Marco playing songs from our records and then talking with us about the band in between. It was going well, and I actually began to get nervous that there might not be a chance for me to speak in the time we had. I wasn't getting what I expected, which was a big open door to walk through with the story. But then Marco asked suddenly "Greg, the motivation for you to go out and write about all these subjects comes from where?" And at that point I realized that the moment I had anticipated was right there. I paused for a moment, and gave him, and Seattle, this answer:

"In 1991 I moved to Seattle. I was at a party on Capitol Hill and I met a girl there and had a one-night stand with this girl, and slept with her...had unprotected sex with her...and caught genital herpes that night. It was an earth shattering experience for me, something that had no precedent in my life, something I didn't understand at all. In time I had some complications come up. The virus, even though virologist and neurologists can't understand it, the virus actually attacked some parts of my nervous system so that sexually I have experienced numbness over time, starting in 1991, and it's been increasing over time. So I have found myself in a really difficult position. I found myself in a position of feeling extremely scared and extremely isolated because our society tells us to be ashamed, and our society tells us that we shouldn't talk about these things. One in five people have genital herpes. 30 million people in the US. I have no idea how many people experience the numbness I feel, because no one talks about that, no one even knows about that. People with herpes are embarrassed to talk about that. So I felt so completely isolated and have over the years because of the messages I receive from the "mainstream" all the time - from right and left bombardment at all times telling me what I am supposed to be and who I am supposed to be. And I started to question that. I started to question the facade. We put on this facade, this civilized and safe masking that doesn't reflect our humanity at all. We do that because what were told to do. You open a magazine and you see Kate Moss and she weighs ninety freaking pounds and women think "I have to weigh ninety pounds in order to be a woman." We open up magazines and see men with washboard stomachs and think we have to have that in order to be a man. Well it's not true. Whatever you have, that's what you have and that's your humanity. We deny ourselves our humanity. I realized that was going on with me this past winter. People as close to me as members of the band were always asking me "how are you"... "how are you doing" and I would say "I'm great!" Well I was shattered inside. I've been dying inside for a long time over the things that I face, because I don't understand them. Like I said, I don't even know if I'm the only one. So in time dealing with these issues, realizing every day that I was facing lies *with* lies made me really question where I was going, made me really question what it means to be human? What it means is that we're all hurt, we're all afraid, we all smell bad sometimes, and we all get sick. So why do we all agree to hide that? So what I realized is that I *am* human. This culture is not a culture that is only in denial

of death - we see that all the time, there is no death anywhere in our culture - but it's also a culture that is in denial of life. We're afraid to reveal our true selves. And what kills us, what makes our hearts and minds sick, is not that we are damaged, but that we are afraid to *be* damaged in the eyes of other people. We deny that damage every single day in exchange for that empty and worthless facade. And in doing so we all lose. What I learned over time is that I had to resist that as much as possible, and I resisted that by seeking truth in as many avenues as possible. Those truths turned into songs and those songs turned into *Trial* over time."

I will never forget what the studio looked like while I was speaking. It was as if the only thing living were my words and my lips moving. Marco had been leaning far over to his left towards a console to cue a song, and he was frozen there in his chair, bent over at that angle with his finger extended on a button. His assistant Adam had been putting on a pair of headphones, and when I started talking, he stopped dead too, with his hands at the sides of his head and the headphones half on his ears, just staring at me. Marco went right into a song, and as soon as we were off the air, shouted, as if to the world, "You can't PAY for radio this good!!!" He had gotten what he wanted for sure. Timm came over and we shared a moment together. He had had no idea, in the four years the band had been together. I have to say, that it wasn't until I got home that I really felt the first waves of intensity coming from what I'd just done. I spent three hours talking to my partner/girlfriend/lover Cynthia about it. The conversation took us through



The Fifth

worlds of emotion, and for the sake of a bit of privacy, I will leave that part alone. I had her support and respect, and that is what is important there. It was after we finished talking, that I went inside to check my email, as I had given a new email address out on the air. The mailbox was slammed with email: 30+ messages in those first few hours, and only one without substance to it (it said something like "Trial rules" or something inane) The rest were from battered women, sexual assault survivors, people from all walks of life - certainly not at all just "punk" or "hardcore" - who wanted to share *their* personal stories with me, and who had heard what I had said while in the middle of going about their regular average evenings. It was incredible...it was as if I had opened up a door into the actual and real substance of man and womankind and invited people in to talk about our suffering, our fear, and our true depths totally unexpectedly. I got the feeling that each of these people had never imagined that they would be talking that night about the things we talked about in the individual conversations. I was online for hours communicating with people, and while I would have much rather had been face to face with them, the email was excellent nonetheless. I actually got a few letters eventually too, and about ten face to face contacts on the street. It was some of the best communication that ever resulted from actions taken with the band. For me, just knowing that I had been a catalyst for others to cast off the masks and facades even for a night or a little while was powerful enough. But more than that, however, was the fact that for the first time, as I sat there writing to complete strangers about what had just a few hours before been unspeakable that I realized that I finally owned my own past, my own secrets, and my own suffering. I owned them. Not society, not those around

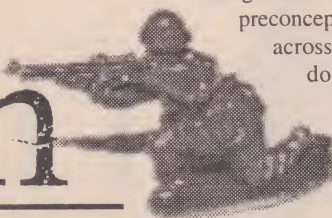
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me, not the strangers and assumed enemies, but *me*. I had taken the control of my own life back from all those around me, and I could finally breathe again. I told Cynthia that it felt as if I was taking, at age 28, my very first breaths since catching herpes in 1991. I realized that one of the best things about all of this was that I could now talk about whatever the fuck I felt like, no matter how personal, at any time I chose. I no longer had to worry about whispered words behind my back. What was someone going to say? "Shh...here comes Greg Bennick...I heard that he has herpes!" The words would be meaningless, as I had just told the entire city and beyond. I thought at length about the empty words and songs on the radio which one can encounter daily. Where is the real suffering there? Where is the risk? Where is the triumph or tragedy? I rarely see or hear it, if ever. I hope that for one night, I was able to share a tiny piece of something real and vital with those who chose to listen...something largely insignificant as far as the rest of the world is concerned. I shared my secrets, my fears, and that was all. But without a doubt, sharing my secrets that night with that audience was the most empowering experience of my life.

For more information about genital herpes, questions comments or conversation, or for a copy of the complete interview on CD, get in touch anytime: Greg Bennick; 427 Eleventh Avenue East; Seattle WA 98102; USA; xjugglerx@aol.com

Column



So You Want to be a Hardcore Singer?

with your humble editor

Considering the ridiculous sounds that are expected from hardcore singers these days, it is absolutely mind-boggling to me that you can't find any information or advice on the subject in any of the various well-circulated 'zines. Singing is different from playing any other instrument because *your body* is the instrument, and if you don't know how to use it and take care of it you will hurt yourself. You'll probably have a hard time singing well, for that matter, too.

You're gonna have to learn this stuff anyway, the slow hard way, if you want to be a singer in a band that plays more than a few shows. Screaming your lungs out every night for weeks, especially while traveling, especially through such godforsaken nightmarish places as New Jersey and Cleveland (where hardcore touring is bound to take you), especially with no money, food, or sleep, has got to be one of the most dreadful things that can possibly happen to the human body. If you don't know how to take care of your voice, you're not gonna give your best performance each night, in which case you don't have any business being there. For that matter, you may lose your ability to sing (or even speak) at all, permanently, as Greg from Trial almost did (it took his voice a year to recover to the point that he could sing again), as others actually have.

And if you want to be a good singer, if you want to make music that matters and moves people, you have to take yourself seriously as a musician. Knowing this stuff is a part of that. I've spent the last five years gathering every trick I could, talking to every singer or actor/public speaker I met, and here's a summary of what I've learned.

A. before you scream.

Before you start singing, it's important to warm up. You need to make sure all your vocal chords are ready to go (it's like stretching before you go running). The best thing you can do is sing a falling tone from the highest extent of your range to the lowest, then rising back up again. I learned this from an actress, and I've since heard the same thing from a number of other sources including speech therapy teachers. It sounds a little funny when you're at a punk show to do this... you can go behind the club/house/squat to do it, or (this is what I do) wait until the rest of the musicians are tuning up and making enough noise to drown you out.

B. while you're screaming.

The most important thing you can learn is to sing from your stomach with your throat open. If you are yelling in a way that uses your throat wrong, you will damage it permanently. You should have your lungs full of air when you scream, and use the air to carry through each note. Remember, the air should be coming from your stomach, your diaphragm, not your chest. Experiment a little and you should be able to figure out the difference. If you are too worried about sounding tough or whatever, you'll probably have a hard time relaxing enough to sing right... but then again, if you're worried about being or seeming tough all the time, you're gonna have a hard time relaxing enough to figure out how to do anything right, you macho fucking moron. Singing is like anything else in that only once you've cast off your preconceptions about how you "should" come across can you really let yourself go and do something good. Listen to Bad Brains for the proof.

Some other hints: Henry Rollins and Tim Singer (Deadguy, Kiss It Goodbye, etc.), always stare at the floor when they

sing because it's the best position for the vocal chords. [It fucking sucks for their stage presence, but it is the best position for the vocal chords!] When your head is down and forward, your vocal chords aren't stretched out, so they can do the most work without being damaged. If you lean your head back, it stretches them thin and doesn't help at all (even if it might look cool for the fucking cameras); it can keep you from having a full sound, too. Try speaking with your chin down and then with your head leaned back and you'll see how it affects your voice. It's not too hard to figure out how to keep your stage presence while still singing with the chin low enough to protect your voice.

Cigarette smoke is going to create a bad environment for throat-tearing screaming; so is cold air. Often a small, hot, moist room (such as summer punk house shows often take place in) can be great for your voice because the moist hot air keeps your throat hydrated, warm, and ready to go. Keep drinking water, lots of water, while you're screaming. Here's a note for practice: the worst thing you can do is scream for a while, stop for a while, and start screaming again. After you stop screaming, your vocal chords shrink back down and they need a while to heal (as we're about to talk about); if you start screaming again then, you're going to damage them. Do all your screaming in one block for the day. You should be able to tell when you're running out of throat to scream with. Stop then.

C. after you're done screaming.

After you're done screaming, if you try to sing a scale, you'll probably notice that you're missing your upper notes. (When you're screaming a lot on tour, you may sometimes only have a

few notes left, in the lower ranges.) What you need to do now if you're going to heal is be *absolutely silent* for a while. Don't speak at all, don't make any noises. This is going to piss off your bandmates, perhaps. *Fuck them*. If you don't do this, your voice won't heal for the next day. Make unintelligible gestures at them with your hands and mime exasperation when they pretend not to understand. Nod a lot. Move your lips silently. But don't speak for a few hours. When you do, speak quietly and gently, don't make any loud or high noises. You should be able to feel what is safe and unsafe for your voice, and eventually you'll be able to tell when you've been silent long enough. Play it extra safe at first, since it will be hard to fight off the various jerks and assholes who don't understand or care about your voice and think you need to talk to them. There are going to be times on long tours when you have to be silent for the rest of the night. This is tough, since it's also important to communicate with people at punk shows (and everyone always counts on the singer to do it), but keep your priorities in mind. It's good to make other band members take responsibility for communicating anyway, so that the division of labor in the band between the "musicians" and the "communicator" doesn't become too deep. This silence may force you to be a little of a loner, an introvert. Good enough. Use the time to think about what you will do the next night, how you will speak and perform better. Remember what you're doing there in the first place.

D. what to put in your body.

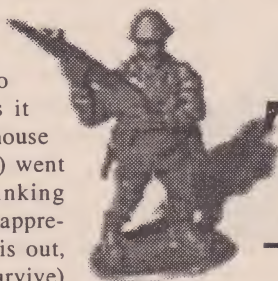
You know what alcohol does to your throat? It dries it out. Artie from Milhouse (and now Indecision) went all over Europe drinking heavily (he may not appreciate me pointing this out, but I'm sure he'll survive) and screaming every night, and fucked his voice up pretty badly. Your vocal chords need to be clean and warm and wet for you to sing well. So like it or not, drinking and smoking are gonna fuck you up on tour, and they probably won't help you too much at home, either, if you want to be a good screamer. You should be drinking constantly, but drinking *water*. I take a big jug with me on tour and fill it up everywhere I can, so if we're ever in a place without drinking water I'm still all set. Drink water constantly, all day long, so you'll be completely hydrated for the show. Drink as much as you can during the show, and a fair bit after, too, to replenish your supply. If you're working hard you'll be sweating pretty hard when you play too, so you'll need to keep a lot of liquids coming in. Water is the best liquid you could drink, at least while you're singing. Fruit juices are too acidic, in my experience... and that bubbly water that everyone drinks in Europe can make you choke if you try to drink it in between lines.

If your voice is roughed up, you can help loosen it up to sing by drinking hot water. Really hot water will loosen your vocal chords up a lot, and if you keep it coming, it can help you maintain your voice to scream longer than you would be able to normally. Last time my band recorded, there were a few days when I drank about three gallons of nearly-boiling water in three hours, and I was able to scream the whole time (though my digestion was fucked afterwards!). I've heard of singers drinking tea or coffee for this same effect; but coffee also dries out your throat like alcohol does, so it's a bad idea,

and water's always the best for your voice. There are kinds of tea that can be good to drink after you sing or in the morning when you wake up to help the healing process. You'll probably wake up with your voice pretty fucked, in which case you shouldn't speak until you've loosened it up with some tea or hot water anyway.

I know at least one guy who doesn't eat anything sugary while he's on tour, because he doesn't want there to be any sugar in his throat that could encourage bacteria there. That sounds a little superstitious, but a little superstition doesn't hurt. Illness is a real danger to singers since they wear down their ear-nose-throat system by screaming, and you have to be really careful to eat a healthy diet, sleep enough, take vitamins, etc. so you'll be able to stay healthy. Being sick is really bad for your voice too! Another thing you can do to help your voice heal, in addition to not talking after you sing (which is the most important thing and absolutely irreplaceable), is to take ginger root and suck on it. This doesn't taste great, but it supposedly helps. I've never been a big practitioner of this but I do know people who swear by it.

That's pretty much all you need to know to take care of yourself as a singer, as long as you follow those rules. There are other things that are really important to singing, like making *eye contact* with the people you are singing to (screaming at), rather than just posing staring at the fucking floor or ceiling; articulating the words of the songs with some emotion rather than just delivering them in a flat, dead "tough" monotone like Karl from fucking



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Earth Crisis or any of the others in the armies of dull one-note singers plaguing hardcore today; taking the time and energy to speak about the subjects of your songs rather than just going through the motions of screaming without offering explanations (as if there's *nothing* to be angry about or discuss in this world!), but those are subjects for another article. In the meantime, I just beg you to take yourself seriously as a musician and a communicator, take care of your health and fitness, and try to really give something new to the genre, if you want to be a hardcore screamer.

The Everyday Effects of Late Capitalism: How We Come to See Power, Knowledge, and Technology by Eric Boehme

—"No doubt I recognize the irony of using technology to decry it. . ."

—paraphrased from Sideshow Bob

Creating political disruptions and change in our time has become increasingly difficult. There is no longer a mass population base to support large social movements, the trade unions have declined in membership, while the groups that are active today are predominantly single issue groups, organizing and fighting for the rights or the recognition of this or that identity, battling one battle instead of many. Whether that means animal rights groups, the environmental movement, women's, gay and lesbian, and racial groups or the myriad other politically progressive issues the left

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fragments and divides over, there is no longer any attempt to look at the larger picture, to see the connections between all of these problems and to fight on a number of fronts for social change. In addition to the fragmentation of left activists, there has been an almost whole-hearted embrace of technology and the specialized knowledge that comes with it. Progressives and movement activists across the world see the interconnectedness and the information potential of mastering technology as a boon to the possibilities for social change.

Yet I wonder whether we should not question our use of technology in both our larger socially connected struggles, and in our individual every-day-life battles we wage against the technocapitalist system. Are we contributing to the division of labor, the growth of a technological elite who come to wield the same kind of power that monopoly capitalists once had? What are the global changes that are pushing technology and specialized knowledge further and further into our institutions and our everyday lives? What are the connections between a growth of specialized knowledge and the power one has in society? Is this a positive change? Can we benefit from the use of technology? Or is technology's encroachment into our very psyche causing permanent damage to our humanity, to our possibilities for revolutionary change?

Many punks see to be extolling the virtues of technology lately. Yet is this a misplaced energy? Certainly technology brings benefits with it, yet when we join the ranks of the "new technolo-

science and capitalism in the first world. This is a quick sketch of the first world condition in which we find ourselves, that of late capitalism. No doubt there is still much to say about the living and working conditions in the countries that are developing industry, manufacturing, and capital accumulation the old fashioned way—this is not the place to say those things. Since 1972, when all the world's stock markets were connected by computer, there has been a radical change in the way technology has penetrated our lives—a change so drastic and massive that it has disrupted many of the old categories we previously used to analyze and describe our history and context. We need to update our critique and look at capitalism now in its globalized, technological, new-information-age form. We need to analyze the developments and changes wrought by late capitalism in new ways—questioning our acceptance of the old, worn-out categories and assumptions where we all thought we could use technology for our benefit and for revolutionary change.

Late capitalism has changed the society and economy of America, Western Europe, and Japan drastically. Most of industrial and manufacturing sectors of the economy have moved to so-called Third World countries in Latin America and the Pacific Rim. For the most part, the economies of the First World now thrive off of the service sector, high-technology/new information sectors, the culture industry/entertainment sectors, and the trading and speculation on the liquid assets of finance capital run by the "professional classes" of managers, programmers, academics, doctors, lawyers, or entertainers.

Globalization has connected all of these sectors through the increased penetration of both technology and science into the institutions of political and social interaction. We are now gov-

erned by a large bureaucracy, run by a technological elite—a set of social engineers and manager—who govern the country just like managers run their businesses. Using the tools of instrumental reason, the goals of efficiency and technical progress based on both the scientific method and the means-ends rationality capitalists use to turn people into tools, the people who run our society utilize specialized knowledge to wield power. Yet unlike the situation of industrial capitalism, where workers confronted owners and bosses through the direct contradictions of their separate interests, all of us who are involved in the service, new information, new technology, new media, or finance capital sectors have similar interests in maintaining and developing specialized knowledge. Indeed, instead of producing material durable goods, these sectors produce and develop new forms of knowledge—virtual products that do not exist anywhere yet have a kind of power over our consciousness.

It is this connection between power and knowledge in which I am most interested. There seems to be an implicit assumption among many of us that the more information we have, the more power we have. Indeed, the way the economic and political system increasingly works, it is no longer income and wealth that give status and power, it is specialized knowledge. All of the "professional classes" that pursue specialized knowledge rely on the deep connections between science, technology, and the creation of

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gists" by becoming computer programmers or working on web design or using the "new media" to make our living, are we just becoming another guardian class for the constantly changing capitalist system? Unlike the direct contradictions between worker and owner in industrial factories, the workers in the new media / new technology field, seem to have no direct place to look to target opposition and rebellion. That's the best thing about working with computers isn't it? You can stay at home and be your own boss. . . or does the technology become your new boss? Do you unconsciously develop a link in a chain so deeply ingrained in you, through your acceptance of the use of "knowledge" as a way to get ahead, through your unquestioning embrace of technology and science, that you pleasantly submit to the newest form capitalism has taken, this newest skin it has grown as it constantly swallows the organic world and any possibilities for drastic change. Do we cheerfully shackle ourselves to the techno-capitalist juggernaut?

I don't think that we can talk about capitalism any longer just in terms of workers and owners, factories, social classes, and any of those other outdated terms Marx used to describe the historical context in which he lived. We have to talk about our situation now. Today. We have to analyze and critique capitalism in all of its various forms. We have to think about how it colonizes both Third World countries, by developing exploitative industrial and manufacturing systems of the kind we experienced a hundred years ago, and our very own country, through an ethic of consumption and our implicit acceptance of the interpenetrations of technology,

more and more specialized forms of knowledge for their increasing levels of status and power. Science and the use of technology become an inherent part of our everyday lives. We gain power over others by our knowledge of science and a greater ability to use and manipulate technology. A new class of elites is developing—a class of professionals who control, maintain, and develop the technology sectors that are colonizing the everyday lives of normal people.

So what can we do? Well, I'm not very optimistic about our chances, yet I think it is vital to never assume anything about our use of science, technology, and instrumental reason. We have to develop new ways of thinking about the way capitalism interacts in a globalized fluid economy and how technological elites are reaping the benefits and rewards of these new inroads capitalism makes into our lives. We have to continue to be active as resisters to technology and capitalism, sometimes using the resources we have available, sometimes refusing those resources knowing the long-term, unconscious effects it will have on us. We can never assume the use of technology or specialized knowledge will ever be neutral—we have to analyze all of their effects. We have to keep the long-term project in mind—by this I mean we have to remember that it is people not machines that will change the world—we have to remember to connect and interact as much and as often we can with potential allies. We have to go out into our communities and resist technology and capitalism on an everyday level, speaking to our friends and neighbors where they live and on their terms, not on ours, yet still keeping in mind the macro-level, global connections that capitalism and technology use to bulldoze the rest of the "life-world." We have to find human connections in desire, love, joy, and ecstasy—all of the things that technology transforms into an individualized, alienated experience. And we have to remain active—whether that means in groups or as individuals we must constantly be on the lookout for places, times and organizations where we can resist and refuse the assumptions and the effects of a world of globalized late capitalism, a world supported and sustained by science, technology, and specialized knowledge.

—Eric Boehme
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Further Reading:

Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*,
Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism: Or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*
Jurgen Habermas, *The Rational Society*,
Ernest Mandel, *Late Capitalism*,
Herbert Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man*

Disgruntled CrimethInc. Sweatshop Worker Presents Demands

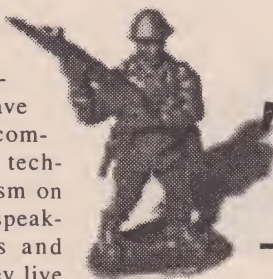
An unsolicited response to Inside Front readers in general, yet specifically tailored toward specific participants in this issue's letters section, and, also, those who chose not to participate. From Paul F. Maul Artists' Group member Vladyonovich Perciavellian.

Compatriots,

While attempting to lay out and beautify this current installment of Inside Front, I've become uncontrollably discouraged. I fear that collectively we miss points that should not, that *cannot*, be missed if we are to be any kind of threat to contemporary mores.

If you've read this correspondence section you've been witness to details that will prove important. You've become aware that an important dialogue concerning totalitarian distortions of democracy, cooperative endeavors and discussions of other political concepts that affect our lives has been omitted due to circumstances beyond our control. This is a much more serious and substantial void than we may at first realize. Such a dialogue in print may have provided a heavy enough counter-balance for what remained to be more acceptable: music.

Hardcore fails when it creates anything less than revolutionary inspiration. In an album, a soundtrack, a compact disc, I want to see a fucking soundtrack for disobedience—something that gives me enough of a jolt to take my deviance further than I would without it. Bands that cannot or will not inspire such behav-



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ior are simply not worth my time. I'd also question whether they're worth your time. Further, music, or discussions with music as the point of focus, that do not inspire or attempt to inspire such radicalism, should find itself deleted into oblivion (Fat Wreck Chords bands, for example, and the 'zines that exist to promote them, should wake up one day to find that nobody cares about them, since they don't care about anything beyond themselves). *The travesty is we've allowed our attention, our energy, to focus on the vehicle rather than the travels and the destination.*

If the preceding correspondence is any accurate reflection of I.F. and the thought process it inspires in its readership (which I'm not wholeheartedly convinced of... yet), then I resign. I don't want to participate any longer. As I stated, my time is quite important and if my efforts and energy support nothing more than discussion about music details I want out.

In a broad sense, hardcore and most of its participants in general have come down with a bad case of Missingthepointitis, this letters section being only a minor reflection of that. When I receive my copy of I.F. I indeed find worthwhile discussions about concepts that truly affect my life: capitalism, collectivism, anarchism, employment, housing, food, world travel, trans-continental cooperations vs. corporations, and, of course, revolution and radicalism of all sorts. This is what I.F. gives to me and these are the topics on my mind upon completing an issue. I have difficulty understanding how others walk away from the magazine inspired to do nothing more than perpetuate hardcore music rhetoric.

This phenomena could possibly be the result of the continuous bombardment of emptiness from the hardcore

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media's contemporary powerhouses. Long, drawn out and impeccably detailed blow by blow accounts of who signed where, who changes what, who places that infamous series of tightly spaced thin black vertical lines to a backdrop of a white rectangular box and on what release, in addition to other nonsensical gibberish that speaks very little about our actual lives and, better yet, how to improve them. Discussions such as these, among others, have inspired a culture so hopelessly introspective, so perpetually self-involved that we often fail to realize the context of our existence. Is there nothing more important to discuss?

An entire section in a widely circulated magazine (a great magazine!) is set aside for us to knead and mold, shape and change in any fucking way we possibly want to. If we have something important to say, we're essentially guaranteed that many thousands will hear us—at no cost at all! Indeed, someone else will foot the bill! This blank canvas, this prime opportunity (please listen closely) is virtually exclusive to punk, hardcore, underground and other radical publications, and should be one of our most cherished assets.

- Vladyonovich

The CrimethInc. Board of Trustees Responds:

Uh, yeah, you're right. Endless band interviews, vapid and wandering, advertisements, promo-pack photo covers on 'zines, old school vs. new school, what the fuck are we do-

as human beings? And that's not to defend the legitimacy of debates about "old school vs. new school" music (that's not about us as human beings either, is it!)... just to say remember why we're here and what we're doing.

Punk Feasts, Politics and Change: A Communiqué From the CrimethInc. Leninist Brigade for Political Re-education

Collective authorship

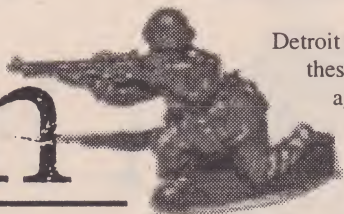
Today, punk rock fests suck. No doubt everyone's a still a big fan. Yeah, three days of listening to your favorite bands is really the way to go, yeah, that's fucken punk man. . . but these days, we think fests are all about entertainment, buying shit, and making money. What happened to the politics, to the community, to the workshops, the meeting people, the coming together and connecting for political and social change, the community beneficiaries we put on these fests to raise money for? Why does every political kid I know have more and more critiques of these things when these fests were the way we met each other in the first place? Why are we becoming more and more disaffected from the broader, music-entertainment based group of people who come out to these fests, pay their money (not thinking about where it is going), buy a bunch of shit from these huge punk-rock distro flea-markets, listen to some bands and leave, not having had their lives changed and their worlds rocked?

Detroit fest—1999. This was the fourth of these annual fests in Detroit and once again, filled with the tension between kidz who care about politics and those who just want to rock out. Every other year, this fest was run by a collective group of kids working together. This year one guy went

behind the collective's back and took over booking and running the fest. Every other year, there were a number of workshops where hundreds of kids sat down and talked with each other—you name it, we talked about it—the Gulf War, sex and gender issues, economic change, anti-racist action, becoming radical teachers—we taught each other the tools for social change. Every other year, the collective made sure there was space and time for the workshops. This year, it seemed there was less and less interest in workshops, politics, and connecting with each other. Every other year, there were three or four prominent beneficiaries that were given donations out of the money made from the fest—thousands of dollars given to these groups to help them in their pursuit of social change. Each group had a literature table, often spoke between bands about their organizations, and often gave workshops on the issues they were working on. This year, the organizer neither advertised nor talked about who the beneficiaries were supposed to be (some members of the CrimethInc. Collective saw only one very generic information sheet). None of the groups showed up to talk about their issues, and there seems to be some suspicions about whether any of the groups are getting any money at all from what was supposed to be a benefit for them.

Sure fests are a dime a dozen these days. Sure many of them are about music and entertainment, about making money. But not Detroit. Fuck your Initial Records Crazy Fest, we don't care about you, we will not show up and support you. But not Detroit. Like the Minneapolis and Columbus Fests, Detroit is about building ties that bind, about doing things and acting in

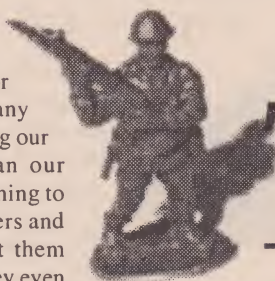
Column



ing rehashing all that shit? As if the rest of our lives isn't boring and trivial enough already. We do need to concentrate on where we're going and why, not just on the make and year of the car we're driving ("spirit of '88!"). The problem is, "political" magazines filled with abstractions and infighting and, most of all, complaints about the apathy and stupidity of the rest of the world are equally boring, equally ineffectual, and possibly more harmful, for they inevitably alienate everyone else. The others end up just reading the hardcore press kit 'zines because they think the "political" kids are fucking dicks. The question is how to make a new kind of magazine that will be exciting and accessible enough for everyone to read and participate in, while simultaneously offering ideas and resources for changing our real, everyday lives.

I don't think Inside Front is nearly there yet, in the letters section or any other. And it's true, in fact, that we've actually fabricated one letter in each of the last three issues, just to keep things more interesting in it—! So this issue we didn't do that, and you didn't like the section, go figure. But we're working towards it, I hope. And I'd like to say that I thought Norm's letter was actually quite good: if we are going to make music that makes us capable of things we were not capable of before, that's a serious undertaking, and we will need to do some thinking and talking about how to go about this, how to explore and try new things until we find the magic combination. As long as we don't get so distracted by the form that we forget the content! So that's why we still feel pretty good about covering music here. Our emotions precede our politics, anyway, don't they? Or is this not about us

ways that are punk but are about more than the music. Detroit is about politics and community. Of course there has been the tension since the beginning between political kidz and unpolitical kidz. Yet we can't let these fests turn into just one more fucken money generating machine. Fests are public spaces where we can talk and act on our private politics. We can't let these places turn into another mall, another blank-eyed, uncritical place to consume your fucken products, your fucken genocide. We need to take back fests as public places or start our own. Who really gives a fuck about the bands anyway? There have been very few bands lately that this branch of the CrimethInc. Collective has seen, that fucken rocked our world, that made us want to take to the streets with a black mask and a molotov cocktail, that inspired hope, anger, and energy for us to fight for political and social change. We go to fests to see people not to see bands. We hope against hope that a band will inspire us, but we prioritize connecting with people over the spectacle of entertainment. We go to fests to meet new allies, to make new friends, to experience the pleasure of love, desire, conversation, physical intimacy, social interaction, and to gather the political tools to fucken change the world. We don't need more bands as performers, we need each other as political allies and friends. And we can't lose the public space of the fest to those who don't care about community or about politics. We think we should be RECLAIMING the fests, not surrendering them, going into fests like Detroit prepared to make them events for politicizing kidz, by any means necessary, using our creativity rather than our penchant for complaining to seize those fence-sitters and reactionaries and get them into politics before they even know what hit them.



The Fifth

Or should we even try to save fests, to try to keep politics in punk? What the fuck? If you don't care about what we care about, we're not gonna force you to be political (in spite of our Leninist moniker) . . . you have to find your own desires. We know that our desires involve connecting with each other. We know that fulfilling our desires involves everything punk fests were originally about: the music, the speech, the words, the politics, the resource sharing, and the ultimate goal of social change. For those of us who care about politics, who care about building communities, who have dedicated our lives to change, and who still want to connect with each other as we grow older, we need to stay in touch. Those of us who still live and love punk rock but who are developing our political skills and resources outside of the punk community, we need to continue to have a way to connect with each other, to talk, to play, to see each other face to face, and connect our lives in a way that will make it easier for us each individually to effect a broader change.

Toward this end, the CrimethInc. Collective hopes to encourage an all workshops, all play, all human weekend, as an alternative to the all entertainment, all-consumer-all-consuming spectacle of alienated groups of unpolitical and uncaring kidz gathering together to "watch" music and each other. Not forgetting the importance of fighting for those

spaces left to us, fighting to keep politics and community an integral part of the Minneapolis, the Detroit, the Columbus gatherings, whatever other music fests or shows we organize or attend, we propose a new gathering, a new society, a new connection and a new chance for re-connection, to fight for change. A purely political kid fest might be a GREAT opportunity to plan how to do that. That is what we think we should do: regroup what is good about punk for us, clarify and solidify it, and then try to give it back not just to the world but to punk too, to keep that soil fertile so it will produce more of us. This generation *will not* be the last one of politicized punks, severing ourselves in frustration.

Maybe we're living out the dreams and fantasies of our left ancestors—the Port Huron of the student movement, the summer camps of the Old-Left communists, the Union Summer organizing drives put on by trade unions—yet we think this is an important step in establishing a community base from which to connect with other groups and to connect with each other as individuals. We need the chance to politicize new kidz that larger music fests bring us, yet as a friend of the Collective's said at Detroit, "we have much to teach and learn from each other." Join us. Let's share the tools we each have, we each use in pursuing our pleasures, our hopes, our politics and our dreams. Fulfilling your life's desire lays the groundwork to bring the larger changes to

make it possible for everyone to fulfill their life's desire. Desire unceasingly. . .

—The CrimethInc. Collective

For info on the all-workshops fests and networking by political punks contact:

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What the Punk Boy Means When He Says Electro

by Spencer Ackerman

Call the INS, because Dylan Ostendorf of *HeartattaCk* is having his music infiltrated by a certain unsavory element. Aesthetic purity has seen better days.

This is from Ostendorf's review of 12 Tone System's *Soundtrack To Synthetic Music 7*," printed in *HeartattaCk* #21:

Hmm...the title says it all. Pretty synthetic. At least they used the electronic stuff the whole time and made it legitimate, rather than throwing in a note and stupid-ass electric croaking sounds or some shit. Doesn't mean I'm down...five boys dressed in black with greasy hair and softly spoken vocals that are oh-so New Wave or retro or something. I'm sick of all the movie down...five boys dressed in black with greasy hair and softly spoken vocals DJ-Looping-Unoriginal-Bastard and whoever the fuck else is making "synthetic music" in their basement studios and I'm sick of everyone else who wants to jump on the electro-techno-hip hop bandwagon. Devo are not men, Ink & Dagger are not vampires and computers aren't musical innovators. At least I can hear some real sounding drums in there somewhere lost amidst the mechanical storm... It's clear that Ostendorf is less concerned with reviewing 12 Tone System's record than he is with expressing his frustration and discontent over the proliferation of electronic music.

Column



So distraught is Ostendorf with the electric threat that he makes no distinction between genres; the "electro-techno-hip hop" conglomerate is apparently a single concerted effort suckering people towards an empty promise. Buy the electronic snake oil. Comes in one variety.

Why is this suddenly troublesome? Although it has been ghettoized with astonishing efficiency, 'synthetic music is older than punk rock. Perhaps Ostendorf's problem is that 12 Tone System, his point of departure, is on the hardcore label Keystone-Ember. Ostendorf is observing the preliminary stages of astonishing efficiency, 'synthetic music is older than punk rock. Perhaps cultural miscegenation in his own backyard. Someone has to warn people against polluting the bloodline.

Culture is fragmented in America. As evidenced by the existence of this magazine and the thousands of similarly-focused others, whatever vice-like hegemony pop culture ever possessed is now either disregarded or recycled for an ironic jab at its impotence. Pop culture's weakness is exposed whenever it co-opts an underground element for feeble renegotiations of its own expiration date. Its plain to see that culture is not manufactured and dispensed in a topdown fashion; in whatever form it takes, it is constantly being created regardless of economic disadvantage, historical or contemporary oppression or even a lack of an audience. So, there's no uniform American culture, which is not something to be lamented.

Instead, we have myriad communities of interest bound together by some common cultural force. Sometimes that binding force comes from an element of pop culture. I read in *Stay Free!* about the owner of the world's largest collection of culture. I read in *Stay Free!* about the owner of the world's largest collection of "Little Mermaid" memorabilia. This middle-aged man's obsession, coupled with his mustache, would paint him as a pedophile in the eyes of cultural auslanders.

Inside Front couldn't exist if music wasn't a binding cultural force. Amongst the young, music's accoutrements often become a nation; music is rarely, if ever, music alone. The vitriol of the patriotic against the pop culture imperialists is a reminder of this elevation. The first song on the *Lyricist Lounge* compilation is Cipher Complete's plea for the faithful to "Bring Hip Hop Back." (Bringing it back. Sound familiar?)

Once the subcultural nation is established, it's easy for the understandable desire for artistic control to transcend a particular artist. When the idea is entrenched within the community's thinking--once the community is aware of its binding force--it becomes a new idea: the notion of cultural purity. Hardcore For The Hardcore.

This is often a necessary instinct for the culture's preservation. When a major label, for instance, distant from the culture, signs a subcultural phenomenon, its marketing strategy is to sell the subculture along with the band. When this happened to punk rock in the mid nineties, it gave punk bit of an identity crisis, and examples abounded of reactions to the perceived infiltration, all in the name of keeping punk alive. Punk reevaluated its membership requirements when faced with

The Other.

But the idea of cultural purity can be very dangerous. The Other isn't always an outside element bent on exploitation. When The Other emerges from within the ranks of the nation, reactions are perhaps more volatile. Music based subcultures are bound together, after all, by music, and when musicians begin to branch out of the borders of the nation for inspiration or experimentation, the nation is thrown into confusion. The faithful become The Other, like 12 Tone System did in Ostendorf's eyes.

The culture's tenuous grasp on a common identity is shaken. The experimental artists are scorned for not paying attention to the glass ceiling while derivative artists are embraced when they give the culture what it wants to hear. Faced with the destabilizing force of new influence, cultural pundits hearken back to an idealized time when the culture was pure. The myth of the Ideal Form, ever present in the history of the world, resurfaces in music-based subcultures as the Old School. Be it in hip hop, jungle, drum n' bass, techno, industrial (assuming, of course, that Ostendorf is wrong and these genres are in fact distinct), jazz, rock and roll, heavy metal, or punk rock, the idea that at one point in the not-too-distant past all was well within the pure culture has proven to be a powerful force for resisting change. Once the myth disseminates throughout the culture, distinctions are easily made between the loyal and the disloyal--the only distinction that matters from the perspective of opinion leaders in their attempt to reinforce the criteria for cultural identification.

The culture regains identity at the expense of a part of its constituency. It is at this point that the culture is no longer beneficial for the experimental artist, for *any* artist.

An interesting paradox: a music-based subculture develops, presumably, because pop culture doesn't pay an appropriate amount of respectful attention to a certain musical idea. This prompts a motivated individual or group to approach that idea in response to pop culture's unsatisfactory treatment. Like-minded individuals join in with a slightly different approach and the culture materializes. Once faced with the "Inner Other," the purist element in the established subculture takes the place of pop culture when it disregards, marginalizes and finally purges the Inner Other's unfamiliar experiment. This has grave consequences for the subculture: once a healthy haven for artistic growth, the subculture shows itself to be concerned with self-referential perpetuation. In an attempt to save the nation from an inevitable paradigm shift, the purist element destroys what it tries to preserve-- the spirit and purpose of the subculture.

The tactics of the purist element are present in Ostendorf's review. The ultimate aim is to delegitimize the achievements of the distasteful element. This marginalization, to be successful, must not deal so much with the substance of the particular example in question, but with the nascent threat it represents. He identifies the Inner Other (12 Tone System's use of electronics, in this case) and complains about its presence, regardless of how limited 12 Tone System is in influence. Secondly, he extrapolates beyond the boundaries of the Inner Other's control--how are 12 Tone System responsible for what's on movie soundtracks?

Thirdly, he condescendingly mocks 12 Tone System for doing things which modern hardcore bands do, namely writing music in basements, dressing in black and using a soft-spoken singing style, as if these are only legitimate musical accoutrements for rock and roll bands. Fourthly, by stating that "computers aren't musical innovators" he slyly implies that 12 Tone System isn't comprised of human beings. This is an especially disparaging association to a subculture that frequently employs iconography skeptical of technology's dystopian potential. Of course a computer isn't a musical innovator. Neither is a guitar.

Ostendorf's reference to "DJ-Looping-Unoriginal Bastard" is particularly pitiful. Every Wednesday in February at the Knitting Factory in New York, Paul D. Miller (AKA DJ Spooky) hosted "Afro-Futurism," a forum for experimental black artists to gain recognition. Aside from tinkering with traditional African music's, the common bond between the artists was a willingness to experiment regardless of musical genre. And Ostendorf would have us believe that the incorporation of turntables (by which he means any kind of un-rock instrument) consigns these musicians to a contemptible status? Sounds like what opera said about jazz, and what jazz said about rock, and what rock has been saying about hip hop for twenty years. What X says about un-X.

The desire for musicians to experiment with an intermingling of rock and roll and electronic music reflects the staleness of both cultures. This new hybrid was inevitable. It's so ridiculous to be-

grudge an artist respect for refusing cultural allegiance over innovation. As Spooky put it: no props for the culture cops.

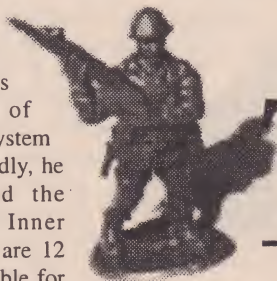
Spencer Ackerman can be contacted at 678 E. 24 St., 1st Fl., Brooklyn NY 11210.

All the Arms We Need?

by the notorious Bryan Alft

I've been thinking a lot about guns lately. I hate them, and have never had any desire to own one. This negative feeling towards guns was fairly unique among my family and among the community I grew up in. I spent the first 18 years of my life in a fairly rural area where hunting was an integral part of life for many people. And, I have family members who are committed gun collectors. Nevertheless, I am at a loss to understand the interest in guns or gun culture.

My opinions toward guns have evolved quite a bit over the last year. I had always been the standard bearer for the usual liberal belief that guns should be outlawed, or at least severely controlled. And, I probably will never understand the desire to own an instrument made solely for killing. However, distrust for those in power has made me wary of attempts to remove guns from the hands of the citizens. I believe we should have a right to ensure that we are equipped with the tools to rebel against a government should it fail to be representative



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of the people and make attempts to remove liberties.

So what is my concern about guns? I think the heart of the problem with guns in this country is the romantic notions so many people hold about gun ownership. Guns are interwoven into the ridiculously distorted and overdramatized made-for-television history of the United States. And, this history of our nation, with its pioneers holding a gun in one hand and a flag in the other, is widely linked to the image of a tough and rugged man.

We are taught from day one in this culture that we must be tough and manly and to 'take no shit' from anyone. Movies and television teach us that 'real men' use force to prove their worth. Guns are shown as the easiest and quickest and toughest way to prove this masculinity. Ownership of one is a patriotic part of our 'proud' American history.

Shoot first, ask questions later. Suddenly, every boy and man in this society who maybe doesn't feel so powerful or manly, can own a gun--have the power to take out anyone who pisses him off on the street--to shoot his asshole boss if he wants to--and so the gun becomes a surrogate ego, their manhood, the proof that they are tough as nails--like all great Americans.

This type of image is what sells the NRA and other right-wing pro-gun causes, and also fills the coffers of the gun manufacturers. And, is certainly a factor in high crime and murder rates. We need to work as a culture to change the attitudes we exhibit about guns and violence. If attitudes were changed about the ownership and use of guns, then there wouldn't be a need for laws to curtail gun prevalence. Guns should be viewed as a

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necessary evil—only to be used in an extreme situation, not as a beautiful and desirable item, nor as part of a simple entertaining video game. We should loathe them and their use, as we should all violence and war.

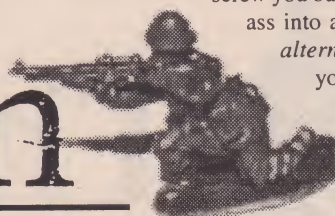
Gun advocates are quick to note that 'guns don't kill, people do'. Absolutely(!), so start teaching a fear and disgust for their use. Stop teaching that shooting is fun. Stop teaching the use of a deadly tool as a way to resolve conflict. Certainly, I would never want to disallow someone the right to defend oneself, but let's make the act of shooting at someone so loathsome an act that it really, truly only happens under severe situations, not when someone fucks with you in a parking lot!

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Column



Editor's note: In response to Bryan's article about guns, I think it's worth pointing out how the A.T.F. has used gun ownership as a pretext to attack and even slaughter countless anti-statist (or at least antisocial) groups. The conflicts with militia movement and David Koresh's compound in Waco are only two examples. It's almost as if the U.S. government permits us our "right to bear arms" only for the sake of having an excuse to wipe out any anti-government force that gets too rowdy and ambitious. Guns are there in the stores so that when they feel ready to start arming themselves and taking their struggle against the authorities seriously, the authorities can come in and shit them down. Perhaps (in the U.S., at least) a revolutionary group could stay viable and have deeper effects if they didn't offer the government such an opportunity to destroy them. Remember, on the playing field of sheer physical force, they will always have us beat. No matter how many guns you have, even grenades and bombs and tanks, they will always have more—and they will justify using them against you to the public on the grounds that you have them and are a public menace. Yeah, the idea of being able to fight their coercion with force of our own is really attractive, and there are situations in which that can work (or at least I hope there will be soon!) But every time I get fed up with everything and I want to go get guns and start planning my first wave of terrorism, I ask myself: do I want the power? Or just the symbol of it?

What is a Union, What Does it Do, and Why Should I Give a Shit?

By Dave Coker, Industrial Union 640, Delegate #231, Industrial Workers of the World

"Everybody gotta work in this world. Some folks lucky, some folks ain't" -Mojo Nixon

Truer words have never been spoken like the above quote by that great country-folk-punk laureate, Mojo Nixon. The aforementioned line comes from a song about a chicken processing plant bursting into flames in the sleepy little town of Hamlet, North Carolina. It seems the boss had ordered the exit door chained shut in an effort to keep workers from stealing chickens, or worse yet, going to the bathroom. As a result, those workers were burnt alive. Had there been a Union in place or a pro-Union presence on the job this sickening incident could have most likely been avoided. This example is one of the more graphic ones that can be used to illustrate how a Union presence on the job could drastically change the well being of the workers. In this case it meant the difference between life and death.

The cold, hard and pretty much unavoidable fact is that, if you're not already working, you're going to have to get a job at some point (unless, of course, you are on Mr. Brian D's plan...). Having to go to work can be an unpleasant experience in and of itself without having to worry about some asshole boss trying to screw you out of your overtime pay or chain your ass into a burning building. *So what is the alternative?* The alternative is arming yourself with an understanding of what a labor Union is, how it can benefit you, and how to use (or get around) labor laws when necessary. I've been a member of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) for about three years now. The IWW not only has a long and proud history of revolutionary labor struggle but is still active today in the labor movement. The following is from the viewpoint of my understanding of revolutionary industrial unionism (read: DIY Unionism) as put forth by the IWW.

What is a Union?

Only about 12% of the U.S. working population is unionized. Over the past 60 years Unions and working people have suffered major rollbacks in the gains that were won by struggle in the 1930's. Unions have gone from a viable force in the U.S. to one of mystery and misinformation. There is a great deal of confusion as to what a Union really is. Forget Jimmy Hoffa, forget all the mob stories you've heard, the real deal is that the boss can do whatever she or he wants when there is no union in a workplace. Your pay can be cut, you can be fired, unsafe working conditions can be a day to day reality for you on the job. There are next to no limits to the abuse you can suffer in your workplace. It's really hard to win an argument with someone who can fire you. Working people found out a long time ago the hard way that they didn't have any power or protection on the job as individuals. What they also found out was that their voice was much more effective on the job when they acted together as a group. This is what a union is at its very base; an organization of everybody who works for a boss, using their collective strength to (1) *Stop the boss from doing what the workers don't want*- like firing employees without just cause, awarding jobs or higher wages based on favoritism or discrimination, treating workers unfairly and with disrespect, lowering wages, or lowering safety standards, and (2) *Make the boss do what the*

workers want- like paying higher wages, providing health care and paid leisure time and treating workers with the respect they deserve.

The Legal Process of Organizing a Union.

The answer to the question of how to organize at your workplace is certainly one that is more extensive than what I can offer here. There are different situations that are presented at every corner and turn of every organizing campaign. What can be offered here is information on the actual legal process by which unions are recognized on the job as well as a few tried and true tactics that the IWW has been using for nearly a century.

Getting to the point at which you will try to gain union recognition is the hard part. (Gaining union recognition is when your boss officially recognizes the Union and agrees to negotiate workplace terms with the Union) A majority of your fellow and sister workers will have to join the union for it to serve as the official bargaining agent. There are no "textbook" organizing campaigns. Every workplace offers a different climate and, in turn, presents different obstacles. Building solidarity with your fellow workers on the shop floor is the key. After that is done there are essentially three ways to gain union recognition; voluntary recognition, independent recognition, or a National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) election. The *voluntary recognition* includes situations where the employer, verbally or in writing, accepts the union's claim to represent a majority of employees. Another route to be taken is an independent election to be conducted by another, neutral, third party (other than a governmental body). A swift election presided over by a third party is preferable to the NLRB election which can take 30 days or more. Faced with the demand of union recognition though, employers will usually demand a NLRB election. This allows your boss time to try to convince (or coerce) your fellow workers that they don't want a union. Your employer will prefer a NLRB election because it can be a drawn out and legalistic process that can be postponed for several months. By the time the election comes around many of your union supporters may have been scared out of the union or fired under the guise of misconduct on the job. This will be a crucial time for the organizing campaign. You and your fellow workers will need to seriously consider what resources you have at your disposal to push back any offenses your boss might make.

While the NLRB can be a resource, particularly when your boss has started firing union supporters, it can also work in your disfavor. To simply rely on the NLRB and labor laws (many of which aren't suited to *real* protection for workers) is a poor route to take. Many charges have been filed with the NLRB resulting in a sweeping "legal" victory five-seven years down the road. By this time it doesn't really make any difference as the union is probably long since busted and supporters have moved on to other jobs- there is no union in place to celebrate this hollow victory.

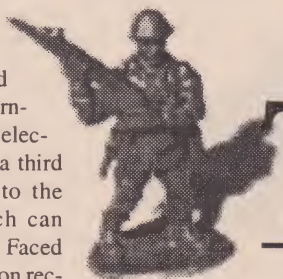
A Union Contract

In theory the union contract, or collective bargaining agreement, is put in place to secure the gains that workers have made through struggle and sacrifice. In practice it can be quite a different thing. The union contract is a double-edged sword. It wasn't until 1939 (thirty four years after the IWW was founded)

that the IWW even used contracts in the sense that we see them today. Up to that point the IWW had always settled problems on the job with direct action. While contracts can be used to secure gains, they can also be used to bottle the action of a militant rank-and-file. Union contracts as we know them today are inevitably riddled with no-strike clauses. When the right of the workers to stop production is taken away their best and most effective tool in class warfare is taken away.

Acting Union at Your Job

Acting Union is the real meat to any organizing campaign and is the first step into solidifying a serious Union presence. It is important to remember that even if the organizing drive at your workplace falls through it doesn't mean you have to give up hope. *You can still act union on the job.* Section 7 of the National Labor Relations Act states: *Employees shall have the right to self-organization, to form, join or assist labor organizations, to bargain collectively through representatives of their own choosing, and to engage in other concerted activities for the purpose of collective bargaining or other mutual aid or protection.* Acting union is realizing that the interests of the workers and the bosses don't always align (in fact most of the time they run in direct opposition to one another) and, being a worker you take the side of other workers on your job. You act as a unit to solve workplace problems that are created and maintained by your boss. In addition *acting union* is a good way to show skeptical workers on the job that a union is to their best interest. For instance, there was a coffee shop that myself and one other IWW member worked



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in a few years ago. It was a small mom n' pop type place with a staff of no more than 20 workers. There was no "official" union in place but we organized against workplace obstacles as if we were a Union. The pay was low, we were treated disrespectfully by our bosses, and promised pay raises had never come through. All these grievances came to a head one day as we all stood in the kitchen receiving our meager paychecks. We all agreed to meet later that evening (outside of work) to decide on a proper plan of action. That night we talked about what we didn't like and how we thought we could change those things. We made a list of our grievances and elected one worker to go to the bosses and lay those out. That worker made it clear that it wasn't just one or two employees who had a problem, but the entire staff. The following pay day those promised raises had been instituted. It was a good feeling to know that our collective energy could push through demands and have them met.

Direct Action Gets the Goods!

"I don't know of anything that can be applied that will bring as much satisfaction to you, and as much anguish to the boss, as a little sabotage in the right place at the right time."-Bill Haywood, Founding Member of the IWW

It is also important to remember that while labor laws are in place, they may not be enforced in a manner that really protects workers. Working people *cannot* rely on the government and government bodies to aid them in their struggles against the bosses. They are a resource to be used in a worker's favor but they are not our only resource. The laws are written in a manner

that mainly protects the interests of the bosses. The courts and laws are all on the terms of the bosses, but when we bring issues back down to the workplace then things begin to be put in terms of the workers. The simple fact is that working people run this society. It is by our labor that roads are built, dishes are washed, and books are printed. As the old IWW tune goes "without our brain and muscle not a single wheel can turn". You could stand in your bosses face all day long and reciting labor laws that pertain to your situation and still have your ass fired. But when the workers start doing things that slow down the profits the bosses sit up and take notice. This being said then, the question of what to do remains. Through the years workers have devised various creative ways of forcing their boss to grant demands. These can be work slowdowns, whistle blowing, sitdown strikes, sick-ins, dual power, or monkey wrenching.

A *work slowdown* is exactly what it sounds like; a method that keeps you on the job, but slows down your bosses profit. Railroad workers around the turn of the century in Indiana were notified of a cut in their wages. Immediately they took their shovels out to the Blacksmith shop and had two inches cut off of the scoop. They returned to work and told the boss "short pay, short shovels".

Whistle blowing is simply telling people the truth about what goes on at your job. If you work in a restaurant, for instance, then perhaps you could contact your local health inspector about the rat problem the company has in the kitchen.

The *sitdown strike* has a long proud history in working class struggles. This tactic was employed by IWW theater extras facing a 50% cut in pay. The 150 extras, dressed as Roman soldiers,

Column

Further Reading and Other Resources

The IWW has a veritable wealth of information and literature that could benefit you in your struggle to gain a more democratic workplace. In addition we also produce a monthly newspaper, *The Industrial Worker*, that has all the latest national and international labor news. We'd also be happy to answer any labor related questions you may have one on one. The following is a short list of further reading on the subject.

Labor Law

-*Labor Law for the Rank & Filer*. By Staughton Lynd. Charles H. Kerr Publishing (1740 West Greenleaf Ave, Chicago IL, 60626)

-*Rights of Employees and Union Members*. By American Civil Liberties Union. (Available from Association for Union Democracy, 500 State, Brooklyn NY 11217, for \$17 ppd.)

-*IWW Organizing Manual*. By IWW.

General

-*Solidarity Unionism-Rebuilding the Labor Movement From Below*. By Staughton Lynd. Charles H. Kerr Publishing.

-*The General Strike*. By Ralph Chaplin. Reprinted by IWW.

-*One Big Union*. By IWW.

-*How To Fire Your Boss-A Worker's Guide to Direct Action*. By IWW (Available from the Greensboro IWW, Po Box 10093, Greensboro NC 27404)

-*Sabotage*. By Elizabeth G. Flynn. Reprinted by IWW.

Contact the IWW General Headquarters at 103 W. Michigan Ave, Ypsilanti MI 48197. Ph: (313)-483-3548. Fax: (313)-483-4050.

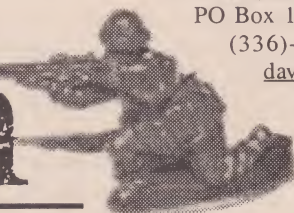
Email ghq@iww.org or the Greensboro IWW at

PO Box 10093, Greensboro NC 27404, Ph:

(336)-574-2905.

Email:

davecoker@usa.net (313)483.3548



Inside Front Personals

Classified ads are free in Inside Front, as long as we remember

to run them for you, with one exception: if you are a record company/distribution whose catalog features Cosmopolitan Magazine-style photos of skinny models flaunting fashionable band clothing (a la Initial Records), we are not amused, and will charge you \$100 per word... you cynical, apolitical motherfuckers!

waited for their cue to carry the Queen out. When the cue was given they all surrounded the Queen and refused to budge until their pay was not only restored, but tripled!

A *sick in* is a way to go on strike without really going on strike. The idea is to have a majority, if not all, the workers call in sick thereby crippling business for the day. This tactic is the traditional method used by public employee unions which are legally prevented from going on strike. It is swift on-and-off method that will be hard for your boss to counter.

Dual Power is basically ignoring the boss. Workers often have the means at their disposal to institute changes on their job- no need to wait for the boss to do it.

Monkey Wrenching is a very broad term. It can be defined as any number of tricks or devilry that reminds the boss how much his or her workers are needed (*and how much the workers don't need the boss!*). While all these tactics are nonviolent, they are usually illegal and should only be used only during open wholesale class war. This could be anything from creative uses of super glue or "losing" vital workplace items. Perhaps restaurant workers could place a bunch of live crickets or mice (purchased at a local pet store) in the kitchen after hours and then give the Board of Health an anonymous tip. The possibilities are endless and your creativity is the only limit.

These tactics are all tools for a disgruntled work force to use as a means to gain respect, higher wages or whatever is lacking on the job. Be creative and you and your fellow and sister workers should be able to use these tactics, modify them, or devise others to fit your specific situation.

NB GRAFIX—Looking for any bands, labels, 'zines, etc.—hardcore or non-hardcore—who want art-work and/or design done in any style... I've done work recently for such bands as 25 ta Life, Voice of Reason (CT), No Holds Barred (CT). Will work for free, at cost, for trade, or *cheap*... Get in touch: Nick Baxter, 15 West Dayton Hill Road, Wallingford, CT 06492 USA email: dhelix@icomm.net

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN—The results are in! After extensive polling, we have now found that the winner of the trophy for the person most likely to ruin hardcore for 1999 is Aaron Turner of Hydrahead Records. Congratulations, and keep on ruining hardcore! This free classified paid for by the Bob Bennett Booster Club, Nevada.

CROSSBLOOD Distribution—Still looking for more hardcore/holy terror/S.E./Youth Crew/Old School bands and other distros who wants their shits smelly over here. Write and send your stuffs to Dennis C. Matibag/C.E.T./University of the City of Manila/Intramuros, Manila/Philippines

FNW zine looking for writers and pictures. Labels/bands/zines send stuff for review. Ads are free. "Smaller" hands get in touch to be on cassette comp. 103 Stratford Ct., Georgetown KY 40324 xveganix@hotmail.com

Will trade Unconquered records and merchandise for Gehenna merchandise, records, or body parts. Write to Jason Glines, P.O. Box 40314, Reno, NV 89504

Looking for: Celtic Frost t-shirts, Acid bath merchandise (t-shirts, hats, etc.), Crumbsuckers t-shirts and Y.D.I.T. to buy. Lee Altomare, 61 Linden Ave., Bethpage NY 11714

I am looking to start a tight knit web of persons who are both involved in the hardcore scene and enjoy/ play/collect original 8-bit nintendo games. Contact odind@connectnet.com or Colin Tappe, 118 1/2 W. 6th Avenue, Escondido, CA 92025

Wanted: Unrotten teeth for replacements, please contact Mike Cheese at P.O. Box 83694, San Diego, CA 92138-3694 P.S. no Belgian teeth, they're as bad as mine.

DESPERATELY SEEKING: Magnetic Fields "Holiday" CD, videos of Diamanda Galas/Systra/Morser/Catharsis/Gehenna, and still looking for old Gism artwork and records. Contact the Crimethlnc. address in Atlanta.

Introduction to the

Situationist

What's bad about political/intellectual elitism? It alienates everyone else from politics and critical thinking, rendering them powerless more effectively than any oppressive government could ever do. The propaganda of network TV is not more responsible for the apathy of the mainstream Westerner than the average radical leftist is. Those for whom being "political" and "educated" has become an identity, who use these terms to define themselves as a certain type of person, thus make others think that politics and radical thinking are the hallmark of a certain group of people (a drab and haughty group, at that), no more, and marginalize themselves from the rest of the world which so badly needs some of their ideas—but not their scornful "specialism," not their divisionary attitudes and identities.

One of the Situationists' chief goals was to fight this conception of the self according to roles played in present society (i.e. intellectual professor, indifferent bricklayer, student radical), so it's ironic to see them used everywhere now by people who want to assert their status as members of the high political elite. Everywhere I turn now (Refused and other band lyrics and slogans, the AK Press catalog, and an even worse piece in Adbusters) I see the terms (which, since the academic language they used isn't common, are already exclusive and exclusionary) thrown about—spectacle, detourn, derive, etc.—and the ideas misused and misrepresented by individuals who obviously have read little or none of the original texts but hope only to be impressive by citing the "latest" in hyper-radical/-intellectual French underground thinkers.

To combat this sort of thing, which ghettoizes thinkers who had ideas relevant to everyone to the most "sophisticated" of armchair revolutionary coffee-table discussions and college historical studies (which are always about putting ideas in the museum/mausoleum, rather than bringing them to new life), a straightforward, accessible, user-friendly introduction is in order. In the punk community (my thinking is that each of us travels in a few different communities, in which they know something about the needs of the people around them and can thus figure out how to act in everyone's best interest) that should take the form of an article, in a widely read 'zine like Inside Front.

Unfortunately, and honesty is always the best policy on these things (though a part of me would love to set up a smokescreen and just plow through this article with no regard for content, quality, clarity or responsibility) I have to admit something to you, dearest readers of Inside Front: it's five in the morning, I've slept two hours a night for two weeks, I just moved out of the last house I will stay in for at least twelve months, the

...the next badge

article is due in three hours before we leave for a ten hour drive, and I'm too fucking exhausted to write the lengthy, detailed introduction you deserve. The more I think about it, the more I realize it could be a fucking book and still not be complete, anyway. But you're all smart kids, so our "Introduction to the Situationists" need not be more than a suggestion that you track down the original texts yourself. It would be much better for you to do the reading yourself and pursue the stuff that interests you, anyway, than to just soak up a watered-down version here. Still, let me offer a tiny bit of background.

The Situationist Internationale started as a group of artists in the late 1950's, from a number of different nations, publishing together a magazine critiquing modern society in its various economic/social/political aspects, and meeting periodically to discuss and further refine their theory. They wanted to bring Marxism up to date, to construct a theory of what was going on in society that was preventing people from being able to live fully and act freely. The result was a critique that centered around everyday life, what happens to people and what they do on a daily basis, rather than abstract economic forces etc. The idea of the "Spectacle," the empty roles and values and passive rituals that modern life perpetuates (and vice versa), was at the heart of this. The Situationists were characterized by a healthy opposition to ideologies, too, and denied that there was such a thing as "Situationism," doing their best to fight off the stultifying, paralyzing effects of dogma and party line.

Early on, there was also a lot of interest in such topics as geography: how could cities be designed so they would bring the most pleasure to their inhabitants, rather than just being created randomly by "market forces" that people think of as beyond their control (when actually it is their actions that create these forces)? To pursue such questions, Situationists would go on extended "derives": wanderings through environments designed to explore their psychological conditions. Another commonly-referred-to Situationist idea from that era is detouring: to detourn is to take an old art work, form, or formula that has a prescribed meaning in society, and, by adding some new element to it, bring out its "true" meaning: an example would be re-titling a "Dilbert" cartoon "Despair." (You can probably imagine how that works.)

Eventually there was a falling out between the artists and the more purely radical members, who saw no hope of real art being made until after a full scale social revolution—or at least in the act of that revolution itself. Anything less was treading water, in their eyes, keeping the farce of capitalist, alienating, uncreative life afloat for one more miserable day. The artistic faction left, and the re-

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maining group became more and more involved in perfecting their critique. In the late '60's, a student group influenced by their ideas pulled some clever stunts at their university, which eventually escalated into the events of May 1968, in which the French government was quite nearly overthrown: workers joined students in a full-scale, national strike, fighting police and riot squads in the streets, refusing to recognize any authorities, asking questions in every corner of society that were usually quarantined to the radical sector... non-stop discussions were held about how a new, truly democratic society could be formed, and for a month the fate of humanity seemed up in the air. Finally, the labor unions sold the struggle out by negotiating merely higher wages, and everyone went back to work as if nothing had happened; but that month stands as evidence of how much dissatisfaction there is in the modern world, and how it can rise to the surface under the right conditions. They don't teach us about May 1968 in U.S. schools because they don't want us to know that such things are possible.

Most of the ideas in *Inside Front* are Situationist-influenced: the emphasis on how you spend your real-life time (rather than what abstractions you pledge allegiance to), how time and space are formed and controlled by the ways our present system forces us to interact, what the effects of other systems of interaction might be, all that goes back to them (and beyond, of course). The Situationists saw themselves the same way the CrimethInc. 'workers' see ourselves, as full-time (neither part-time nor professional) revolutionaries, with an immediate stake in things changing and no interest in getting too comfortable in the role of dissenting outsiders. Many of the slogans you see so many bands and 'zines use (even this one) were Situationist slogans. Their influence is everywhere in our underground.

That by itself is not so significant, but the fact that in their analyses of the same things we're thinking about in hardcore punk today (consumerism, socialized roles, issues of economic exploitation and oppression, etc.) they went so much farther than most of us have yet is important. If you're interested in ideas you read in magazines like *Inside Front*, one of the next places you could go to get more ideas and inspirations is the Situationists and their texts. Don't be too intimidated by the cliquish more-anarchist-than-thou guy at your local bookshop who claims to know *Society of the Spectacle* backwards in Greek; they might really have something practical to offer you for your life.

Reading:

These are the books I have sitting around me as I write this:

Society of the Spectacle by Guy Debord (Black and Red, Detroit)—This starts out terrifying (insofar as it's so abstract and theoretical that it seems to be talking about *nothing*, as well as being absurdly academic and dry as toast), but gets a little clearer as you proceed. If you're going to try to learn about this stuff at all, you should eventually give it a shot, since this is one of the most central and important books to come from the Situationists; but go slowly, and with patience...

The Revolution of Everyday Life by Raoul Vaneigem (Rebel Press/Left Bank Books)—This book is equally academic and frustrating in places, but in place of *Society's* blankfaced inhuman approach it is filled with the sort of passion for life and experience that *Refused* brought to the fore in their politics. That makes it a lot more likable, and perhaps more dangerous in the hands of young, romantic punk kids, since the insight is no less here than in Debord's book—in my opinion, at least.

What is Situationism? A Reader edited by Stewart Home (AK Press)—This is the sort of second-hand rehash that everyone is reading. The title is a slap in the face to those of us who thought the anti-ideology aspect of the Situationist "platform" was among their most revolutionary ideas. There are some great insights and leads to follow in here, but there's some shit as well... and even a little tiny bit of radical infighting, egotism, and careerism too, inevitably. Look past it and you'll find, in small doses, some of the clearer summaries of and reflections on Situationist ideas and influences that you can get anywhere.

Guy Debord—Revolutionary by Len Bracken (Feral House)—This is by far my favorite critical/historical work on the Situationists. It covers a lot of the theory, with enough clarity and simplicity that it's accessible (thank god), while also telling the life history of one of the people at the center of the whole thing. That combination of abstract ideas with factual events that played out in reality makes the stuff in here seem humanly relevant as well as theoretically right on. Yeah, this is a good book!

Enrages and Situationists in the Occupation Movement, France, May '68 by René Vienet (Rebel Press)—This is a blow by blow historical account, written by an insider from the radical core of the struggle, of what happened before and during the events of May 1968 in Paris and France in general. If you're interested in seeing how the ideas we're talking about here played out in practice, this is what you want to read... plus, it's filled with photos of graffiti, great slogans like "Live without dead time!" that have been ripped off a thousand times in the past decade.

There's an anthology of articles from the Situationist *Internationale* journal and similar writings, translated by Ken Knabb (Bureau of Public Secrets), that has real value if you want to read these guys in their own words, too. To learn more about the artistic aspect of what they were doing, especially early on (and I think this is the most overlooked aspect of the Situationists, and wrongly so), you might be able to go to a university art library and look for catalogs from retrospective exhibitions, etc. If you're interested in this stuff and want to go into any more depth, but can't find the resources, just write us and we'll photocopy or steal you more stuff.

REFUSED

← The Realization and

REFUSED ARE FUCKING DEAD

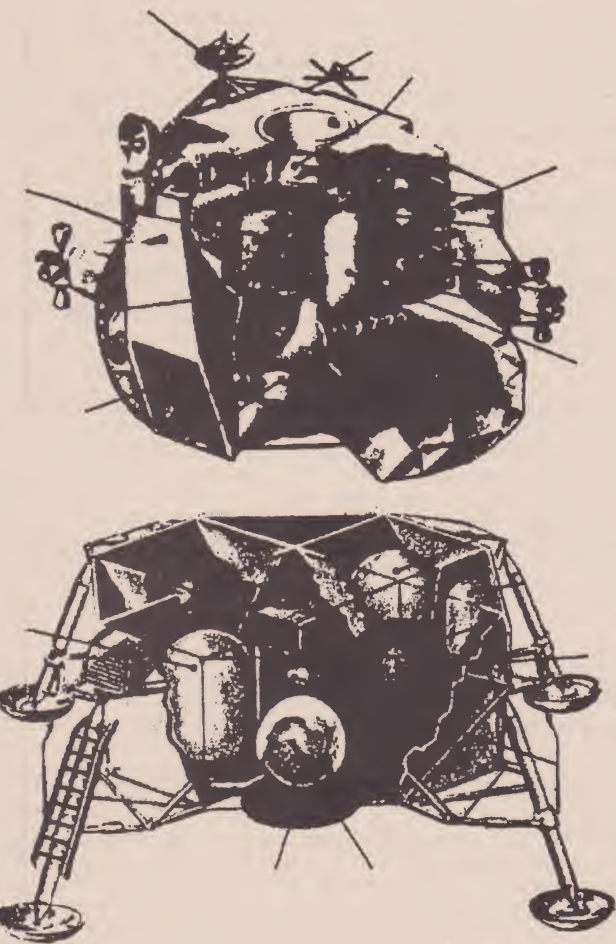
The Final Refused Communiqué to the Masses, October 1998

Just like the political theorists and philosophers (Baudrillard, Foucault, Derrida, Debord and so on) we also managed with a sort of self-fulfilling prophecy. A manifestation of an idea to a concrete action.

When Quilapayuns in 1972 realized the importance of widening their spectrum of action by dividing the band into 5 different sections to be able to spread their ideas on as many locations and to as many people as possible they had realized the principle of collective mass-organization.

A division into 5 new directions means in practice 5 new projects that can challenge and fight the boredom and death that sneaks into our everyday life, 5 new ways to make the political manifesto that once was known under the collective banner of "the Refused Party Program" concrete, 5 new forces that can devour and choke every tendency of the bourgeoisie shackle that keeps us down.

So why does Refused have to die to be able to rise from the ashes like the Phoenix? It is impossible to take part in a revolutionary program when every aspect of existence has to be projected as entertainment and music, a tradition that both in expression and creation has been dead for far too long. We were hoping that we could be the final nail in the coffin of the rotten cadaver that was popular music, but unfortunately the reification was too big for us to succeed with our feeble attempts to detourn this boring discourse. When every expression, no matter how radical it is, can be transformed into a commodity and be bought or sold like cheap soda, how is it then possible that you are going to be able to take "art" seriously? When every political idea has to become safe and categorized just so that it can be defined by disgusting "journalists" whose only aim is the selling of issues and the cashing of paychecks, how can we then show the seriousness of the situation? When the single purpose of every song written is to accumulate capital for the record companies that will only kill every attempt at spontaneity and creativity, how are we then expected to create? When every show played just becomes another brick in the wall between people, between "fans" and "stars", when we instead of getting communication and interaction are being forced to become nothing but consumers and producers. When people are being praised as geniuses and idols just because they play music or write books or something equally boring and "cultural", when the widespread belief that their creation is more important than that people take part in everyday life, what does that say about the rest of us and what does it say about the system that we have? When we continue to uphold the bourgeoisie myth of self-realization by saying that anyone can make it just as long as they work hard or pick up a guitar, we uphold the dream of good vs. bad jobs (rockstar = good, factory worker = bad) thus we also uphold the class system and the justification of it.



As you may know by now, REFUSED had a great impact on the lives of some of us here at Inside Front. I was lucky enough to know some of the guys already, which often helps me to get more out of a band. So this is also intended to give a little more context to their music, for those of you who don't know them.

Do not—and I cannot emphasize this enough—*do not* run out and buy the Refused "Shape of Punk to Come" record on Epitaph. Steal it.

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REFUSED:

Suppression of Punk Rock

WARNING: This is not to be read as a glorification of a deceased band for the sake of mythmaking or anything else. It is a celebration of some of the great things Refused did, yes, and of some of the things that are great about punk rock, but it is meant to be more than that. It is an attempt to look at a project passionately undertaken by a handful of punk rockers, to which they dedicated their lives for more than half a decade, with the intention of seeing what lessons the rest of us can take from their experience. Rather than just another way to exalt the past and sell records, this interview should function as a sort of self-criticism for the punk community, so that we can learn from our triumphs and mistakes and move forward.

When the self-appointed elite talk about culture, the culture that tricks us into believing that there is such a thing as culture, without any thought or consideration of the political or economical system. When we become just another sub-culture with all the right attributes instead of a real counter-culture, then it is time to die, to revalue the position that we are in.

Refused "broke up" on the 26th of September 1998 in Atlanta, Georgia, and in a last feeble attempt to break the linear timeline that the modern ways of production have forced upon us we played the last show in Harrisonburg, Virginia on the 6th of October 1998. The show was interrupted after 4 songs by the local police force who thought that they'd had enough. We knew that they were onto us but it was both a shock and a relief that they did not catch us until the last show.

Then, after 7 years of trying, we finally managed to create our own time-space within the capitalist power structure. The crowd managed to manifest a moment of passionate living when they continued to scream "rather be alive..." to the corrupt and useless preservers of private property. So what now? We will continue to, at every attempt, overthrow the class system, burn museums and to strangle the great lie that we call culture. We will continue with new projects and forces to do everything in our power to overthrow the capitalist structure that alienates us from every aspect of life and living, smash the reification that forces us to dress in outdated identities and rules: we will continue to demand revolution here and now and not in some vague future that all reactionary leftist fundamentalists and reformists are talking about. We want every day and every action to be a manifestation of love, joy, confusion and revolt. This is the last that we have to say about it, **WE WILL NOT GIVE INTERVIEWS TO STUPID REPORTERS** who still haven't got anything of what we are all about, we will never play together again and we will never try to glorify or celebrate what was. All that we have to say has been said here or in our music/manifestos/lyrics and if that is not enough you are not likely to get it anyway. We **THEREFORE DEMAND THAT EVERY NEWSPAPER BURN ALL THEIR PHOTOS OF REFUSED** so that we will no longer be tortured with memories of a time gone by and the mythmaking that single-minded and incompetent journalism

offers us. Instead we need to look forward. We've got everything to win and nothing but our boredom to lose. Refused are dead — long live Refused!

Refused final communiqué.

This is Refused own words, and they will not answer any questions at all.

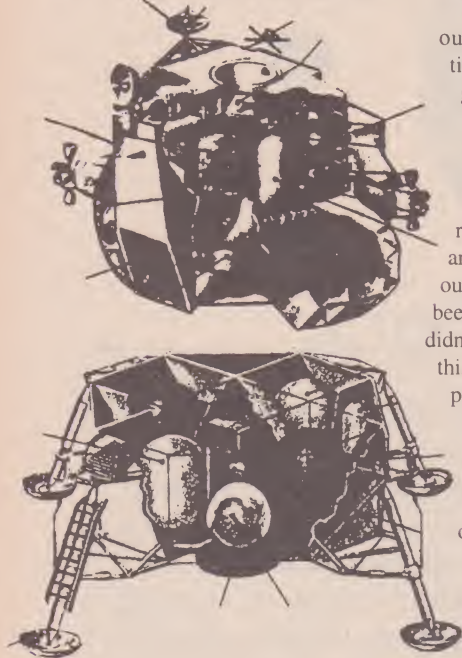
For comments, please contact BURNING HEART RECORDS.

Gender Roles, Hardcore, and Refused

When I first got into hardcore, I was a very angry young man, frustrated and impatient with society in general but unable to put together a coherent analysis of what I was frustrated about. All my hardcore "role models" were also angry young men, a bit older than me, who in retrospect weren't much different than the mainstream men they were rebelling against: they talked and acted violently, they weren't particularly interested in the perspectives of women or people of other ethnicities and backgrounds, they placed a premium on toughness and made a religion out of denying the validity or even possibility of compassion, sensitivity, community itself. Predictably, my relationships with other hardcore boys (including my close friends and bandmates) fell into the typical patterns of men's relationships in the mainstream: we competed against each other constantly and in everything, we almost took pride in disregarding each other's feelings and needs. Needless to say my friendships were often as irritating as they were rewarding, and playing together in the band was sometimes nothing short of agonizing.

I remember at one point I got a letter from a guy who did an emo label on the West coast. He wrote that, on principle, he wasn't interested in angry music made by men. The way he saw it, men in

Refused is fucking dead



our society are conditioned to believe that anger is the only emotion that is acceptable for them to express, and so if you're a man, making angry music isn't rebellious or revolutionary at all—it's just acting out the role that you've been constructed to fill. I didn't know how to answer this. It seemed like a compelling argument; but a lot of the time I felt nothing but anger, and it seemed wrong to deny the legitimacy of that emotion completely and refuse to express it.

At the same time, I was finally starting to think about gender roles, about how men and women are taught to behave and how this can prevent us from being complete people and living full lives. It was hard to admit to myself that this might be going on in my own life, too—for what if it was? I had no idea of how to do things differently. I'd never seen men act or interact differently and I had no concept of how it could be done.

I finally came to a conclusion about the question of men making angry music: I decided it would be a mistake to deny the worth and meaning of rage just because the person feeling it was a man. But at the same time, there isn't anything revolutionary about going through the motions you've been taught to go through: being macho, being tough, expressing the same violence and lust for domination that characterizes the motherfuckers you're fighting against. So it's OK to be a man and be angry and play angry music, but it has to be *your* anger, *your* outrage, not the charade you've been molded to keep up so that the status quo never changes.

Still, I had no examples of hardcore singers who were doing that. I was beginning to meet people who had the courage to step outside the narrow confines of their socially defined roles (though there seemed to be more women doing this than men, at least in the U.S.). But though I wanted so badly to see these ideas applied to hardcore, I had no idea where to start.

That was one of the reasons it was such a revelation for me the first time I saw Refused perform. They were doing everything I had wondered how to do, breaking every stereotype and archetype and institution of gender, expressing a broader range of emotions at once than I had ever seen before. And effortlessly, it seemed! Before this starts to sound like mere press-release glorification, let's talk about exactly what they did that worked.

Although I hate to concentrate on the "front man" (even from that designation, it's clear what a symptom of our sexist, hierarchical society it is that we tend to focus on the singers of bands), a lot of it comes down to their singer, Dennis. Dennis's performances mixed expressions of all different kinds: at one moment he would be dancing around with a giddy flamboyance that no typical hardcore boy would dare display, even by himself. The next instant, he would be screaming his insides out with more rage and fury than these kids had

ever seen their most pissed off idols exhibit. This was confusing as fuck for the hardcore boys who expected Refused to conduct themselves according to the rules, to act as tough and "manly" as they could in order to impress people and "earn respect." Dennis challenged their assumptions of what it was to be male, of what males had to do in public, of how hardcore singers should sing and present themselves. He showed that it was possible to behave in other ways, dispelling the myth of gender differences in a few short minutes for those who were watching and ready to see. And more than that, he showed how much *more* passion and energy there was to be found in abandoning the shackles of so-called manhood: he showed how *genuine* anger and rage can be expressed better by someone who isn't worried about posing and pretense, and at the same time he demonstrated how much more there is to feel and express than mere anger and frustration. He introduced the idea of being complete human beings, admitting and exploring every facet of ourselves, just by singing and dancing.

On their last record, too, he wasn't afraid to move from one persona to another, sometimes screaming furiously, sometimes singing or speaking in a high, sensitive, "feminine" voice, sometimes yelling with a passion that bridged and transcended gender classifications. This benefited the record, of course, filling it out with more variety and daring. By doing all this, Dennis made it easier for all of us to feel free to be ourselves, to do whatever we want and lead full lives. He provided a role model for younger kids, so that they could imagine other standards of "cool" besides conventional masculinity. And for the older ones, he was an example of courage and transformation, of how it is possible to develop new ways of acting and being.

Although Dennis's was the most visible challenge to traditional conceptions of hardcore masculinity, especially when Refused performed, it's worth pointing out that it wasn't just him doing this. It was the entire band shaking things up: daring, for example, to make music that was more than just one-dimensional "hatecore," to assault traditional ideas of which emotions hardcore bands should express. The final Refused record ventures all over the map musically. It has the same moments of fury and peace, of joy and fear that Dennis's singing does, and more, many more; without it, of course, none of Dennis's work would have happened in the first place. It was Refused's work as a unit that contested the image of the hardcore band as symbol of masculine prowess that was left over from less enlightened times. That was something I'd been waiting to see for years.

Rock Music, Performance, and Self-Awareness

"They're all screaming about the rock and roll, but I would say it's getting old. It belongs in the museum where its rotten soul's been sold."

Refused was a band that wasn't afraid to rock. They leapt about the stage with all the moves and poses of the greatest rock bands, guitars flying and microphone stands swinging. They embraced their role as stars and entertainers—when they were performing, at least, that is. They did their best to out-rock the rockers with their own tricks and formulas.

And this is as well it should be: they were, after all, and hardcore band... that means "hardcore punk," as in "punk rock," as in rock and roll. And hardcore isn't really that much different from rock and roll, whatever we'd like to believe. It's still subject to all the same shortcomings rock has been ever since it was taken from the black underground and made into commercial music for the white youth

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market. Still the same old clichés: the audience passively watching (or at best dancing to) four guys with guitars and drums, the band searching for some last chord progression that hasn't been quite beaten to death yet, the audience seeking to break out of their fatally bland realities by idolizing the singer, who inevitably perpetuates the whole farce with some recycled "charisma" and egotism. Still the same economic transactions, too, the bands being the means for capitalists (corporate or private) to make a living off their communities, to profit at the expense of everyone else—often the bands most of all, who figure they're getting paid in status if nothing else. Every time a hardcore band goes up on stage to play, to challenge people and do something new, they're up against the entire history of rock music as it has been commodified and castrated. Small wonder so few of them manage to fight through to new and crucial territory, weighed down with so many years of tradition, the dead weight of our past.

Refused admitted to all this. They didn't try to sneak around it by coming up with a new little twist to disguise the tired format; they embraced the whole routine and took it as far as it would go. Some have said Refused played with the rock formula to shock us hardcore kids, to evade our expectations; that is true, but they did this by showing us what we already knew (but refused to admit) was going on. They did this for a few reasons: first, to be up front about the cumbersome heritage of their punk rock, to lay all that constricting history out on the table so they could confront it, subvert it, go beyond it. Until someone did this, it was bound to be a ghost always haunting us, always pulling us down.

Refused's rock performances established a direct conflict of the past and the present on a number of levels. Every night they tried to pour their hearts out, they were up against the years of repetition, of drama become melodrama, of passion become farce: using the old, decrepit moves, could they play hard enough, soulfully enough, desperately enough to escape the gravitational pull of the past, and make rock music seem brand new again for a moment? There could be no greater challenge than this, and when Refused played their best shows, it was because they rose to it.

And in so doing, they accomplished a sacred act of liberation, of absolution for the time-worn and -worn formulas they employed. For everything in rock and roll that is now a cliché was once magical, dangerous, fearsomely profound: the first time a guitarist leaped in the air, you can bet every man and woman who saw him felt their worlds end and begin again anew. To fight through the scar tissue of years of Van Halen and worse imitators, to steal back and make fresh again James Brown's moves, Little Richard's guitar licks, powerful magical spells sold into slavery as impotent commodities, to rescue them in the name of the struggle for liberation and passion that rock music has been a part of (if with little self-awareness) at its best moments—to take the dead and bring them back to life, indeed—what more romantic, quixotic, beautiful task could any band set itself?

Another reason Refused played with the tradition of the rock performance was to bring out the tension in *any* performance between "true feeling" and manipulation. They would play manipulative samples in between their songs, to fuck with the spectators' emotions, and they did the same thing by going through rock motions that they knew we are all culturally programmed to respond to whether we like it or not. Watching Refused, I felt myself simultaneously responding to the real emotions they were expressing and the irony of the clichés they were employing, and, despite myself, enjoying the clichés as well. That tension between real and fake is there in all rock music in this day and age, and Refused brought out this dichotomy, played with it, and even subverted our ideas and expectations by blur-

ring the lines between so-called "real" and "fake" emotions, forcing us out of our paradigm and into a new world where the old distinctions are meaningless.

Finally, Refused forced us to register the rock entertainment quotient of what they were doing in order to deal with the problem of being performers who sought to activate people. Performance is a spectator sport. Under normal conditions, it does not activate people, but rather enforces and reinforces their passivity. They deliberately put themselves on a mock pedestal as performers to remind us that we *were* watching a performance, that a rock show is *not* a democratic environment, that rock as we have known it is *not* about the liberation of the spectator but rather her enslavement to keep bank accounts and egos fed and hierarchies in place. And at the same time, they tried to play so hard that they transcended all this. The only way you can get to motivation and action through performance is if you shake people up so much that just watching forces them to re-evaluate themselves. That was what Refused did for me—I'd never been so actively involved in watching something in my whole life as when I saw them in Belgium. As much as they were moving on the stage, I was moving twice as much inside, changing, ripping, growing...

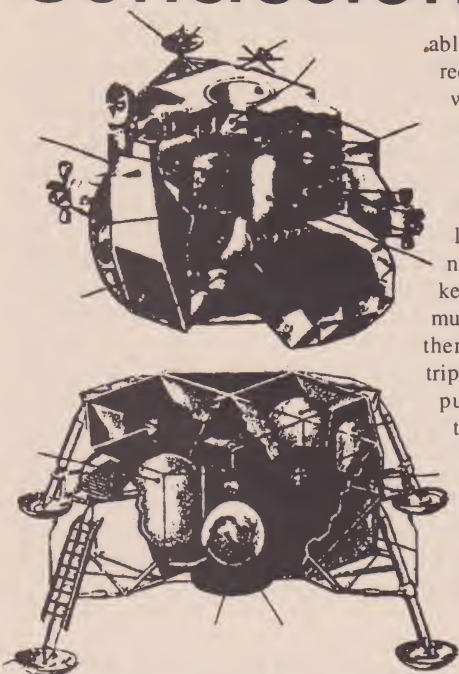
The Shape of "The Shape of Punk to Come": Major Label Recording Quality as Radical Statement

The members of Refused made a full-time career out of the band. They didn't make much money off it (that's pretty much impossible for any artists who keep their integrity intact, no matter how they conduct themselves in the market otherwise), but the band made enough to pay for them to do it full-time. They put out a record on Victory, the most disgusting of the U.S. capitalist pseudo-hardcore labels, and then signed to Burning Heart, a big record label in Sweden (although it's worth noting that B.H. wasn't bought out by Epitaph until the "Shape" record had already been recorded and released). They exceeded their recording budget three times in the course of recording their final record. All this required compromises with what we all generally agree to be the d.i.y. ethics of the punk scene. But, for once, I don't fault Refused for making these compromises. They were on a mission that didn't allow them to do otherwise.

Why did they do all this? To show us what would be possible if we *all* had the freedom to spend all our lives being creative, if we *all* had all the capabilities of modern technology (recording technology and otherwise) at our disposal. It seems strange to us, paradoxical even, for a hardcore punk band to have the time to spend all their lives working on their music, and the opportunity to record an album with the same equipment and time that major label bands do. That's because we're used to having fucked up lives, no money, and no capital in the punk scene. And to some extent, we've accepted this: we don't think about what we could accomplish if we had all the means of our society in our hands, we can't imagine our lives free from boring jobs except in terms of the poverty and difficulty that this brings upon us today. We're accustomed to our role as outsiders, we wear our poverty and alienation on our sleeves as badges of authenticity—forgetting that this is an acquiescence to the marginalized position society has created for anyone who wants to demand more from life than it has to offer.

According to anarchist thinking, the tools and technology our society has at its disposal should be available to all of us, since all of us contribute to society. They shouldn't be reserved for the use of a specialized elite who cast their pearls before the swine of the masses. When the top notch recording studios and engineers are only avail-

Conclusions from a preliminary



able to the wealthiest record labels (the ones who have made their wealth by making emotionless, watered down music that caters to the very lowest common denominator of the market), of course the only music that comes out of them is watered-down tripe and drivel. A real punk band—a band that, by definition, would never water down their art and go through all the bullshit necessary to get access to those capabilities—would never normally get to explore the vast possibilities those resources have to offer. And so we never get to know how much more exciting our music and art could be... or for that matter, how much more our lives could be: imagine a world where everyone could be creative with all the tools and resources our species now has at its disposal, where we could reconstruct our cities themselves in accordance with our wildest dreams! A crazy thought, maybe, but no crazier than the idea that our music, our cities, our lives themselves should be engineered from a distance by an elite of so-called "specialists" who fought their way to the top by stomping on everyone else.

In my eyes, Refused did what they had to to record this incredible record, layered deep with samples, oft-ignored instruments, and carefully orchestrated expectation-defying musical sequences that must have taken months to work out, to show us what we should all be capable of. *The Shape of Punk to Come* isn't meant to set a precedent for all punk bands to try to sign to big labels and get huge recording budgets. All punk bands can't do that, anyway, of course—that's the nature of capitalism: only the most ruthless and bland can get to the top. Rather, it should inspire us to be even more ambitious in our struggle against the system, to be even more greedy and demanding in our lives, to realize how much better all punk music could be if we lived in a society where all artists could focus completely on their art, where all artists could make their art with the best tools available, where all of us could be artists...

...and to fight for such a world, for all of our sakes, by any means necessary.

[I imagine some of you are objecting by now that there isn't enough top notch recording equipment for *everyone* to use it at once, and that if we *all* were artists, we'd have nothing to eat. OK, OK, to some extent that's true, but seriously, with a couple changes (decrease the production of air fresheners, for example) we could make our lives a lot more free and creative than they are... provided we take control of our society back out of the hands of the stockbrokers and C.E.O.s, that is.]

DENNIS

Speaking with Eric Boehme in October

Dennis: OK. . . so hit me.

Eric: I didn't want to talk about the band. I just wanted to talk... you know, a conversation, not a like interview or whatever. But I will ask you about something we were talking around the other night, wondering if you think that the way you perform onstage is "spectacular," and whether you think it alienates the audience, do you think it is intimidating for people to come up and talk to you after because of the persona that you have onstage?

D: Yeah, I think it is. . . which is bad. There is a bunch of different aspects to why I do what I do and I think that the first one is that I am a bit afraid of people. Its easier to do the role, you know, like when I talk between songs I try to be all intellectual and talk about crazy stuff so that people are a bit more confused and don't know what is going on. I mean people that are down with political language, know what I am talking about but... I think that is one of the reasons. I don't want to alienate people, cuz I think of myself as an approachable guy. I would like people to come up to talk to me, they can. Its weird because like I said the other night. It is all about perpetuating the rock star myth. It's all about being there and being the rock star but trying to use this idea to destroy it. Its like the French intellectuals talk about how after the revolution there is no need for intellectuals because they have played their part already, their ideas are already within the revolution. I try to do what I do best. I'm not a very good singer or guitar player but I am a really good performer. That is just how it is. It would be weird to say anything else. I just try to get people to enjoy the show.

E: But do you think that sorta reinforces a passivity on the part of the spectator? You know, as far as our bodies being constructed by a society where we sit back and watch all the time and where if we think at all, it is between choices of what to watch? I feel, and I think the Situationists felt as well, that the spectacle catches everything up in its grasp and that any opposition is played out on the very terms of the spectacle, even the kind of things that we romanticize, like bombing banks, throwing Molotov cocktails...

D: Yeah, it turns into a commodity. Like the word revolution doesn't mean anything anymore because it is used in the same context as cellular phones. Yeah, definitely...

E: But I mean, where do we go from here?

D: I think to clarify a bit of what I think and what I am doing for myself... my whole idea is to come into a scene that is so stereotypical, so predictable, a scene where the ideas are used again and again... to come into the scene, looking the way I do, talking the way I do, and acting the way I act onstage, will hopefully make people think more than just me being another hardcore kid talking about the issues that I talk about just the fact that I am sorta breaking off. I think that people will go home and remember Refused and remember what we did as something different. Hopefully, that will inspire people to think about like, "why was he looking like that or why was he doing that, I mean he was all gay what's up wit that" and people think about what I do and create a reaction. Instead of giving them politics, I will give them more than that... like breaking the mold of punk rock. It's a conscious decision to look different and act different. Not necessarily to act different, I mean cuz some of that stuff comes naturally to me. But stuff like the microphone tricks, I actually practice but when we play music I want to do stuff and it just happens as I'm there. But at the same time, it is a lot about breaking the ideas about what I punk rock singer should do.

E: In doing this every night, I'm just reminded of another band that we both know, where they try to always spontaneously construct a

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study of the Refused experiment

space for revolution to happen NOW, you know and what you saw about how they try to bring the audience into it, the singer roaming out into the audience... I just wondering if what you do raises a barrier between the performers and the audience. I guess this goes back to another conversation that we

had about technical proficiency and how that involves specialization and a division of labor where everyone cannot be a part of the thing that is created.

D: At a certain extent it does... people will notice that the stage is there, it is me, and I'm not some random kid. It is a barrier but I think it is more up to the people to sorta interact in what we are doing and take part in that instead of trying to push them into something, saying you HAVE to be a part. Guy Debord said that "revolution is not showing life to people but to make them live." I think they have to do that themselves. I definitely think it is a big problem and a contradiction when I go up onstage and I talk about destroying the role of rock stardom, or fucking the idol and I know that some people see me as the rock star. It is weird. I just try to use the medium that I am best at to make people think about the my ideas in the way that I appreciate myself.

E: That is exactly what draws me to your stage presence. I can see the pleasure that you get from it. I think maybe that is a thing that just "performing" doesn't have, that there is a pleasure in it and real desire.

D: Yeah, I love doing it. I love playing punk rock and I love being just, Dennis onstage. If I can incorporate that, this feeling of ... "happiness" is the wrong word, but this feeling of doing something I really like with ideas I think are important. Even if it is contradictory. It clashes every other week yet I think about why I am doing this... what can I do that is better? How can I interact and make people more a part of the show than just spectators and consumers? It is hard. Also when it comes down to the fact that there are five people in the band and I'm the one that has these ideas, its hard. Before we went on tour I had all of these crazy ideas of what we wanted to do, I had a hard time incorporating them cuz some of the kids didn't see the point. They are like, "that's kinda stupid. It would be good... break down the barriers... but we just want to play music." That is something that we think about a lot with this new project to keep the spontaneity to let it happen as an interaction not so much as a presentation. I mean, like the Make Up, even if you don't like them, I think they have the right idea cuz they make the crowd sing along, you know jazz it out, it's not much because it is still like performance, but they let people in a little bit more than a normal rock show. You have to have the music that allows people to interact. Up until now you have had all this crazy hardcore music that doesn't allow people in to interact, its too damn hard. It's crazy and loud and trying to incorporate people into that is kinda weird. I mean, this whole band has been about perfection, about being tight, being real good, so it is hard. It's weird too because whether I want it or not, I've become like this rock star. People write me letters, they want autographs... you know.

E: Yeah, like having an interview instead of a conversation.

D: Yeah, yeah. ...like people want to ask me weird questions. Not to communicate on the level that they normally interact on. That puts me in a weird situation cuz I don't want to be there having to feel uncomfortable because people look at me a certain way. Like I talked to Amanda [McKaye], and she says that Ian can't even go to shows anymore because people won't leave him alone. It has to be so hard being in that position where you don't want to... it's one thing being in Aerosmith where you want people to notice you... I always thought about that... it's good to have inspiration but then you start talking about wanting to be like someone... If you look at someone and say "I want to be like them," it is just so alienating.

E: I've been thinking about this a lot and obviously you are as well, being in this place where you are in the midst of this huge transformation in your life. How do we settle in for the long term as we get older and think about revolution over the long term? Yet at the same time, every fucken day continuing to devour the earth and thinking that I want to make revolution NOW and I want to write poetry in gasoline NOW. ...

D: It's a hard transition to make because we are so caught up in this world of buying and selling, of commodification. I don't really think you can step outside of it. Most of the time people that claim they are radicals, like people who move up into the mountains to live away from everything, don't really accomplish anything, it doesn't serve a purpose. It becomes a small sub-culture that revolves around it itself. Instead of being a part of a culture that needs to be changed, they stand outside of society, thinking like "all these people suck."

E: Yeah, I have friends in hardcore who say that they will live in hardcore the rest of their life and they are fine with being around this small group of people. I think there is a certain comfort and pleasure in that which I really respect but at the same time I know that I have my foot in many different communities, not just hardcore and I think I have a responsibility to a larger community, not in the sense of a moral responsibility but in the sense of a kind of human responsibility.

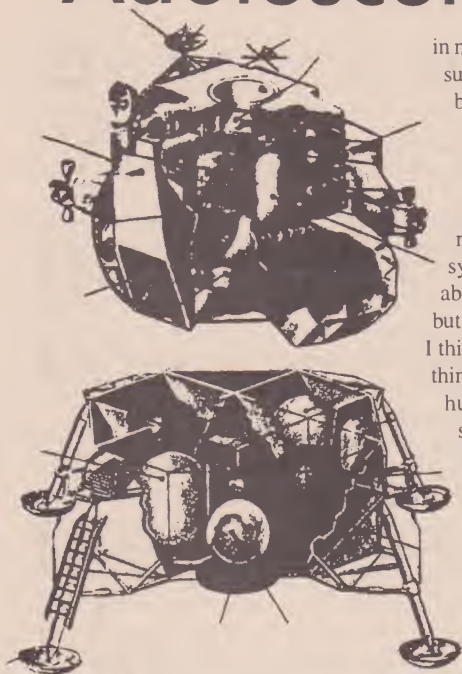
D: For so many kidz you meet, it seems like it is one thing or another. I don't think it has to be that way. I don't think people are similarly minded enough to JUST be hardcore, or just be revolutionary all the time. There are so many places and outlets that we should use... I just think that we need to find new ways of finding pleasure. But I don't think that we can find those ways within the social relations we have now, the economic and political system we have, I just think that we have to have a big revolution before people can begin to start being fulfilled. I mean, that's such a weird term because I can't imagine what it would mean to be fulfilled. But before people can live their lives to the fullest, I think there has to be a total change in the system that we have. It's hard. But there is a certain pleasure in fighting that in itself gives me pleasure and to be in this opposition and to be fighting and knowing that the odds are fucken unbelievable... but at the same time I have all these great ideas. Hopefully someone will catch on. And you meet people that inspire you and you continue to go on. I think that revolutionary people are romantic. Because if you believe in something like this, and you believe that the word revolution will come, it's so romantic. I believe in it but at the same time there has to be a certain naiveté, there has to be a certain way of romanticizing so that we can bear with it every day.

E: What exactly do you mean by romantic people?

D: Emotionally insane! Like this joy... I mean, people ask me, "why are you guys so angry what are you angry about?" Well, of course I'm angry because the world is so fucked up and I see people suffering every day but at the same time, a lot of the fighting and the writing and the singing is because I've found out that you can actually meet people who are inspiring, that you can accomplish amazing things. There is this joy of living and discovering that life is boundless. People who ask me why I'm so angry, I guess I think that I am almost never angry. I'm actually kinda happy because I've found a way to live life to its fullest and it makes me happy to know that I am trying. I think it is a romantic notion to have all of these ideas and schemes and plans and I just go with it!

E: I guess I am sorta influenced by a certain critique of romanticism, a critique of artists like Blake and Rimbaud whom I really love and admire but who are so radically individualized that they separated themselves from all social surroundings; their whole goal seemed to be about overcoming those social tendencies. I guess the closet Marxist

"Adolescent beats with a new



in me doesn't want to pursue that type of thinking because I want to think that somehow we are all connected. I don't want to lose sight of those connections. I mean that's why I can sympathize with ideas about abolishing work but in a whole other way I think that work is something that connects us as human beings. In the sense of working and creating something that we share, not in the sense of working in wage-labor slavery. I think that work itself is important for sociality. I guess the other thing is, I'm wondering if we

work for our own pleasures NOW or like all of those revolutionaries that we talked about who have killed themselves because they became cynical, do we push it all into the future only to later give up? I feel like I never want to be that way, I never want to give up. But one of the things that will keep me from not giving up is to become more selfish, more introverted maybe and not always thinking about someone else.

D: I know where you are coming from. I can totally see your point. It sometimes gets to the point where you can't really talk to people that you don't find interesting because they don't really talk about the same stuff that you want to talk about. It's scary. It scares me. It's a frightening thought that one day I'll get up onstage and no one will care and then I think, "why should I give a fuck." I think that we should just make sure that what we are doing makes us feel good and hopefully it helps other people as well, to never lose sight of the fact that my political ideas are really important to me. Fulfilling my political ideas gives me pleasure. It is a selfish thing. Writing political songs, talking to people... it makes me happy. Hopefully it can affect or inspire or piss people off. Also being older in punk rock makes it hard to relate to other people. I mean people who scream "vegan power" as if that's the utmost political expression that we can have. You feel old and jaded and like, "yeah, I used to be that way once upon a time." It is scary and I don't want to lose that romantic notion that we can actually change the world.

E: I mean, this getting older thing... I know that I am not going to go out in the street and bomb a Shell station, although I encourage everyone to do that, I know that I won't because it will jeopardize the long term revolutionary goals that I have. Sure it is a set of goals that has everything to do with me taking up my privilege but I think teaching is important. And I'm not going to throw away my opportunity to be a college professor by a symbolic act. I don't feel guilty that I'm not doing that kind of work any longer, but I know that I'm not as radical as I could be.

D: Yeah, I know. Some kid gave me a lot of shit because he was asking me about direct action and I said, "sure that is a great thing, go for it, but I wouldn't do that right now." I think that what I am doing right now affects people more than if I was sitting in jail. They got really pissed off and boycotted our shows just because I am rational

about what I can accomplish and what I want to accomplish. I think that's such a romantic idea... I mean yeah, bring me a black mask and a Molotov cocktail. How many people are you gonna help if you can't even talk to people? I mean, you have to weigh what you do best. I think there are many people that are really good at doing something like that. I mean, I know some of these people, but I'm not. I wouldn't want to jeopardize what I am good at because of a silly idea about how a revolutionary should work. I don't feel guilty about it but people do try to give me guilt trips about that because I don't do stuff like that. I think I do revolutionary work as well, but just not in the same way. I think revolutionary work has to take place in all places at all times. There can't be one single action or idea that is revolutionary. It has to be multiple ideas and multiple passions and multiple actions.

E: But in thinking about the difference between the individual and the social and I remember growing up, I thought a lot about this kind of intellectual revolutionary elite, you know, kinda like "smart punks" and how we were going to change the world. But now I think much more about the people that I find revolutionary or inspiring are people that I can connect with—not necessarily smart people but people that I could connect to and have these interactions where I was just fucken inspired and motivated to continue fighting. I'm connecting more and more with these people—staying in touch, we are all getting old together. We're talking about what we are doing, how we are changing and what we want in the long term.

D: YEAH... when you get into this, you find motivation and strength in everything, you're young and fresh, excited... when you get older you become more selective and can't get that feeling again, you have to still seek inspiration. Yeah, I like meeting people who I can talk to who are way smarter than me because it inspires me to go home and read. Sometimes you get in the position where you think that you are really smart because you've read a couple of books and you can throw around these political words. And then you meet someone and they just blow you away... I mean, it's like, "one day, I'll be able to talk like that or have all these crazy ideas." I'm definitely drawn to people to keep on doing this, to keep getting inspired. It's not as inspiring to see bands play as it was ten years ago. I think most people just lose everything. Because the bands aren't inspiring they just disappear and do something else. I still want to stay in this environment, this political and revolutionary environment where there is so much potential to still reach people.

E: I think that for me some of the music is still inspiring.

D: You're right. Once in a while there comes a band that blows you away and you are like "holy shit!"

E: I know... believe me!

D: But I'm much more inspired by someone who thinks about their situation and their ideas and why people do what they do. That's much more inspiring than seeing a guy playing guitar.

E: I guess when I think about it most of the bands that inspire me today are because I have a personal and face to face relationship with the kidz in the band. Like I've spoken to them or I'm friends with them so their music and lyrics mean something. I think it is really inspiring to see your friend rip his or her heart out on stage and feel like when they are talking to everyone, it seems like they are talking to you, or about you and being able to connect like that. Yeah, the music is rad, but it really is the people that are more important to me.

D: I've had the experience where I thought people were inspiring in their lyrics and then I've met them and they are not at all. But the idea of politics, or the lyrics are just smart or whatever, that can be the difference between an amazing band and an average one.

E: Again back to the individual and the social how we get pleasure in revolution... I wanted to talk about art and about the artistic experi-

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thing to see. Smashed guitars just like you've seen on TV. With burning speakers and flaming hair— we'll have a riot right here."

ence. What is the role of art in the revolution? Is art about creating and giving pleasure to yourself in the creation or trying to give other people pleasure, inspiring people through your art?

D: Yeah, I've been thinking about the role of the artist lately... I think there are a couple of contradictory roles that I play. Somehow I think the artist always makes it a goal to speak for other people. I constantly do that and I think it's bad because I think people should be equipped to speak for themselves. Someone made an interview with me and they were talking about how the media and politicians aren't doing their jobs, so is it up to the artists and the culture to talk about these things? I think NO, it is up to the people, there should never be experts, or bosses, or politicians that speak on behalf of the people. I would say we should make art for self-fulfilling reasons. No art should be made solely for the purpose of speaking for others. But if you make art that is inspiring, you can inspire others to do things, especially with music. Yet this is how I feel about music: music has become so commodified and such an easy expression of emotions that most of the music that is out there cuts our emotions off. It fits the lowest common denominator. Strike a chord, sing about love and you sell off these emotions to people. I think that fucken amputates people's emotions. In the spectrum of human emotions, music presents a small part, a safe part, presents a little bit of broken heart, a little bit of going crazy all night and presents it in a package where people actually pay money to experience this. Like, "yeah it was such a good show, I moshed the whole show." Instead of going home moshing... you know what I mean? It's so hard to believe that playing a show can be that creative. I mean the act of creating music is different from repeating yourself. Like playing a song that is three years old and of course I won't feel the same about it when I wrote it so you try to recapture that spirit and sell it to the people. They'll pay you a couple of bucks to have that. I think that's a big problem and it sorta limits the spectrum of emotion that people actually can feel. I mean it would be amazing if music could somehow trade in the full-on fucken madness of living and the full-on sorrows of a broken heart instead of narrowing it down like it does. I mean if you are in the dark like that people consider you crazy. I think music does this a lot. Me and my friend Eric talk about this a lot and these are some of the reasons he doesn't play music any longer. He thinks that there should be other ways of feeling these emotions outside of playing these chords or going to a show. I mean, I realize all of this but I fucken love it. I have such a hard time thinking that I can do something else that will be equally fulfilling. I have to go out there and play and tell people that most of the music they listen to makes them fucking stupid, it is making them lose the emotional spectrum that they could have. And then we play another song. And hopefully the next time I come to town, no one shows up... because they're out doing something else.

This is a part of a longer "conversation," the rest of which appears in A.T.R. #2, available from CrimethInc. or from Eric Boehme himself at 118 Raritan Avenue, Highland Park, NJ 08904 USA.

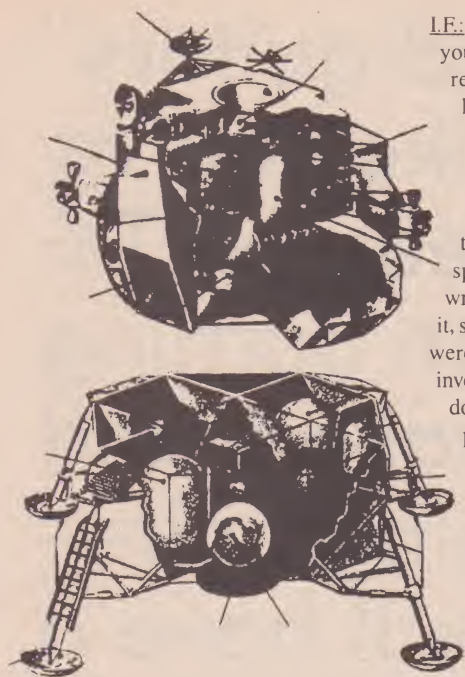
DAVID

Speaking to Inside Front in November

Inside Front: When Refused worked, what was it that made it work?

David: Looking back, it just seemed like we were aiming for something that... we had no idea what it was. When we were good, we were all so focused, especially me, Kris, and Jon... and—and Dennis, the four of us. At the time, we had all these motives... but you can't really speak of Refused as just one band, because we went through so many phases. The first year or two what made it work was me and Dennis, we started off and knew what we wanted and just played and

played and played. If someone thought we were playing too much then they left the band and we brought someone else in. For the second part of it, once Kris arrived, it was different, we sort of changed our direction. The main idea, the main force running through it was the same, just trying to capture and renew the first initial impulse that we had when we began, and that carried us. Live, we basically relived that, every night, at least as long as we were good, though '96 at least. **LF:** It's been said that Refused innovated itself to death, is that true? **Dd:** Yes. The "Shape" record is what killed the band, there's no doubt in my mind. For me, that record was about me and Kris trying to impress each other, with the most intense music... After that tour, in '96 where we played 150, 160 shows, we were so sick of what we had been doing, it got to the point where there wasn't even talk of enjoying playing, and when we got home we were fucked up and had to start from the beginning. Kris was always very pleasing to write with, but also very demanding. Clichés never made it past him, there always had to be freshness to everything we put together. To make this record, pushing ourselves and pushing each other, we involved our sound guy and roadie in looking for sounds and listening to the songs while we were writing them. We were trying to find the ultimate form, the ultimate structure for the music, and we went so far into it, and so far up our own asses that we just got lost, which I don't think was a negative thing, really, but once we started recording there were a lot of conflicts within the band because we were keeping Dennis very much outside of what was going on. He'd get tapes from the rehearsal room and hear these huge ten minute versions of every song, without arrangements... we were just pushing ourselves and not really making sure that everyone followed because we were so caught up in ourselves, me and Kris. Once we started recording the situation was unbearable. We called a meeting and sat down and talked, and decided we were going to have to put the band to rest because we couldn't work together creatively anymore. It wasn't the actual originality of the music, it was the progression of the band to an internal imbalance that killed it.



the P.A. and stand there and play air guitar to it.

I.F.: You did use some prerecorded music when you played those songs live... what was that like?

Dd.: It was interesting, because it involved the sound guy in the performance process... but so many times it just got fucked up, and you can imagine how stupid we looked when we'd built up this big intro and the tape was supposed to start and there was just silence, and we just stood there. I did like the risk involved in that, actually. But anyway—I find the mechanical aspects of music interesting, I grew up with metal and was very much into deathmetal, which for me is about the dehumanizing of music, that brutalizing of music, taking sounds and distorting them... and therefore I was very interested in techno music and stuff like that. When music becomes mechanical, it can't be reasoned with, it's like a machine and it's twice as scary and brutal. That was very much what we were going for on the "Shape" record, we wanted a mechanical sound, a prerecorded feel to it, we didn't want it to sound like it was played live at all.

I.F.: That's unusual, because Refused to me was a band that played music about very human themes... was there a deliber-

I.F.: You've told me that you didn't think that record could work live... why not?

Dd.: That record was so worked through, so thought through, the structure... We spent so much time writing and recording it, seven months, there were so many people involved... once it was done, to go out and play it live was beyond repetitive, it was some sort of charade. As far as I was concerned, at that point we could walk out on stage and put the record on

ate contrast there, between mechanical music and human emotions?

Dd.: Well, like that one song on that record ["Protest Song '68"] which is a tribute to the '68 movement and the revolution, which is a good example of free human spirit and human will, we made that song the most mechanical one, with all the drums sampled and looped.

I.F.: Do you think there's a fundamental difference between analog and digital music?

Dd.: I've never put any pride into instrumentation, into being able to play the music... what interests me is what is recorded. I see that as a form of "audio painting," if you will. So I don't think there is anything more genuine or important about analog music. I enjoy the mix of analog sounds, actual playing, with digital sounds, but what matters to me is the music itself in the end. You can make digital music sound more acoustic and organic than anything you can play, and probably the other way around; bands like Meshugga [deathmetal band, I have no idea how to spell their name! -editor] from our hometown sound more technological than Squarepusher [?, again] ever will. Music is more of a mindset, what's in your head, and whether you play it or program it, it doesn't really matter...bands like Meshugga that are repetitive and minimalistic can have that industrial factory kind of feeling more than any electronica.

I.F.: There is a traditional division of labor in hardcore bands between the singer as verbal/political communicator and the rest of the band as musical communicators. This tension seems to be at the root of a lot of the problems bands face... how did this play out in Refused?

Dd.: Me and Dennis had the plan from the beginning, it was our mission, we were going to save the world. We shared views on all the common topics of the day, hardline, Krishna, abortion, veganism... but my focus had always been on music, I mean I started playing drums when I was three years old. Music has always been a theme for me. For Dennis, I think it was a sort of escape from the small town in which he grew up, whereas for me it was a sort of calling. So when Refused got a lot of attention, which we did in Sweden, what was important for me was to have something to offer that I could be proud of, and music was my way to reach out... whereas for Dennis, it made him refine his politics and focus on that, so we kind of drifted apart in that sense. And with the addition of Kris in the band, and my connection with him, it was only natural that we just focus on the music more and more. Dennis focused on the politics more and more because we didn't leave him much room to contribute creatively. But, to some degree—and me and Dennis talked about this on the night of the last show, you remember when I came over to your van and asked him to come out—I had my politics, and then my politics became his politics because he was the spokesperson for Refused. I didn't like doing interviews, I didn't like talking because I didn't think that there

Are you ready baby? For the shape of punk to come. Get the equipment together and we'll meet at the show. Like the rebellious swing kids of the '40's or the crazy jazz heads of the '50's or the stylish mods of the '60's we all need to recognize that style in contradiction to fashion is necessary to challenge the conservatism of the youth cultures forced on us. Strict in our style but with a touch of elegance and freedom and individualism. The uniform and the production of constructive challenges comes in the most unexpected of shapes, Ornette Coleman reinvented jazz altogether and we need a new beat to move to so grab your partner and ask: do you want to go out with me, watch me get on my knees and bleed? This blind date might take you to places unknown and it will be new and scary and vital. But nonetheless there is no danger in exploration and searching. It never tasted this great to scream "yes" and you never had a more enticing cavalier to hold hands with. The new teen hysteria of noise and kisses and politics and craziness and naked fun and beats and books and poetry

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was anyone who understood my motives or our history or where we were headed. So Dennis's opinions were usually just pinned on me, and the rest of the guys in the band. And while my politics aren't that far from his politics, it was still a strange thing. And that's what's very liberating about the Refused breakup, that now I can focus on my own politics, and I don't have to think about paying attention to where somebody else is heading because in the next interview I'm going to have a question about something Dennis talked about in the lyrics, have to answer some question about some aspect of world economics that I'm not interested in at all. It became a sort of a burden, to some extent, for the rest of the band. My politics always go hand in hand with my creative process; I could not become an anarchist without changing the way I thought about music; but it usually goes the other way around, my creative output and intake affect the way I view the world and the way I view people. I guess it's pretty natural that the vocalist's politics are the ones the fanzines and the media focus on, the ones that are brought to the forefront. And I know that Kris has his politics and Jon has his politics and I have mine, but what is known is Dennis's politics, and that is what people identify with. So I guess the music of the "Shape" record was a way for me and Kris to reach out, to influence people ourselves, to show them what we were about, because it was a very personal record.

I.F.: Do you think that things would have happened differently with Refused if everyone had been involved equally in all aspects of the band?

Dd.: Well, the "Shape" record was such a huge project... we could have done it differently and had everyone involved in every decision but it would have been a five year process and it would have been incredibly painful. We burned out in '96, basically. My impulse was that we should do it ourselves, cut ourselves loose from all ties with labels and the music industry and release the record ourselves, that was what I would have wanted, but we couldn't do it, there was no energy left. And if we were gonna do that record we were gonna need money, that a bigger label like Burning Heart could give us. And none of us had that kind of money or energy to put into Refused in that sense. I mean, if we'd started putting our records out ourselves from the beginning it would have been a different story, but after six years there was no one in the band that could do it.

I.F.: Do you think that you guys should have started putting your records out yourselves when you started the band? Do you think that would have made a difference?

Dd.: Yeah, definitely. That probably would have been better. The way we did it, we were like "Oh, some German label wants to license our record! Awesome, let them do it!" and that was that and we never saw any money, still haven't, and then "Oh, Equal Vision wants to put a record out, Awesome!" and we never saw any money... We were so

excited about hardcore and about us getting any attention at all. If we'd done it ourselves, we'd probably have money by now, and we would have had control over what was going on...

I.F.: You would have had more control over the level of popularity your band reached, too, and how you were presented to the world.

Dd.: Yeah, exactly. It's hard to think of whether I regret it or whether I would have wanted us to sell fewer records in Sweden... I can't think like that, we did what we did, and lots of it could have been done better. But we focused on living it, and we never slowed down. It was an extremely intense six year period. We said yes to every show we were ever offered, basically... I guess in '96 when I was having some trouble with my wrists we canceled about twenty shows, with Dennis's ulcer and everything, and that's pretty good for a seven year career. We lived it so fucking intensely. But... I guess there are so many "buts," things that could have happened differently.

I.F.: How did being as popular as you got in Sweden affect you, affect your interactions with other people?

Dd.: I appreciate the way it happened, because I got to see it from the outside. Dennis was the focus, he got the attention, he was the big star, and I got to see how his popularity, how his media persona affected him as a person and how annoying it all was. I could see it from the outside, just look at it and say "this is so ridiculous, why would anyone want this?" I'm a very self-centered person, I'm prone to glorifying myself at any chance I get, I remember when I was a kid and people asked me what I wanted to be I answered "rockstar"... I probably would have wanted that situation, I probably would have wanted to get famous, and I got to see it from an outside perspective. But people stop listening, that's what happens. They stop listening and they start nodding. And I know now that I don't want that. It's an impossible situation and it's impossible to keep a clear head in it.

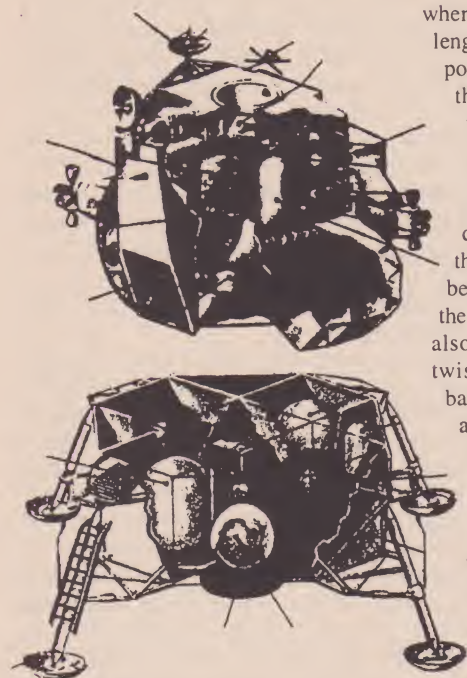
I.F.: I want to go back to what we were talking about with the tension between the political and musical voices of Refused. When you think of Refused, how important do you see the politics as compared to the music?

Dd.: Well, when I look back on Refused, there are three things that I think about: one is the music. Another is what we said, you know, in interviews, our "media persona." It may seem weird to be talking about the media so much, for a punk band, but you know that we got lots of attention in Sweden, we were on talk shows and in every magazine, and the newspapers wrote about us constantly, they just kept writing about us until the day we died. That last manifesto that we wrote, they read it aloud on national TV. So anyway when I think of Refused I think of our music, our politics, and the life. And in all three aspects, what's really interesting to me is the process, the seven year process, and that goes for the politics as well as the music. We had our politics when we started out, and then we had our politics

and traveling and style. It's never been safe to live in a world that teaches us to respect property and to disregard human life. So drop your belongings and get on this soul train, dig the static sound and think that maybe just once there is just us, the kids, playing the day away, it's just us kicking over statues and smashing windows in the houses of parliaments, to show who has the real power. This blind date will take us anywhere we want.



In such an ugly time



Situationist electro-funk hardcore...

I.F.: Let's talk about the title of the record, "the shape of punk to come"—what is that meant to imply about punk rock? Do you still think that punk rock is a legitimate musical medium at this point, in 1998?

Dd.: Speaking of what I know of the American and European hardcore scenes, including Sweden, I think a lot of it is a joke... and I think that that's what drove Refused a lot, in the direction we went was that there were really no other bands that we could identify with, no other bands that we felt were really pushing themselves hard enough, that were giving the kids or anyone, including themselves, that much, and that's what drove us to go as far as we did with "Shape." And the idea of the title partly came from that frustration, just feeling: "no one is fucking doing anything, OK, *this* is the shape of punk to come, we're presenting it to you," just to piss people off, to say that there's still someone out there trying to do something...

I.F.: So do you think punk is still a legitimate medium?

Dd.: Well, so much of who I am I have gotten from punk and hardcore, so to deny its relevance, its cultural, social function as a community, would be to deny myself; I definitely believe in it, still. No, I don't believe in it as it is, I believe in the potential of it... and I think that the potential of it was what caught my interest in the first place, what made me want to take part in it, and that potential is what I tried to make something of with Refused all those years. And the potential is still what I see, though I don't see it realized in as many bands or as many fanzines or as many people as I would like to. But there are some things about hardcore punk that you just don't find any place else. The music that I'm working on now has just left "Shape" far behind, it's way out there, it's not like anything I have come across within the punk or hardcore spectrum of music, but I still want to exist within the hardcore punk community in some way or other. Because punk is the only place where people just come up to you and say "this sucked about your record, and this was bad, and that was good." I've taken part in a lot of different sorts of communities, as far as music goes, for a very long time; jazz, classical music, whatever. And nowhere else does that clear communication exist between the people who write the music and the people who listen to it.

when we did our first full length, and we had our politics when we did the second one. And then the "Shape" record is definitely the most extreme one, it basically combines many of the ideas that we had been talking about in the years before, but it also has a whole new twist to it, which was basically all Dennis. To answer your question, I value all three equally, but what's interesting to me is the process of how we went from Krishna-friendly metallic hardcore to what's on the "Shape" record:

That's something you and I talked about a few days ago: how I'd like my role as a musician to be less mystified, to have my role be like a carpenter, where someone could just come up and say "could you make that window a little smaller, because I'd like it more..." To have the music be a function, and that's how it's been in punk rock.

I.F.: As far as music goes, my view of what the hardcore community should be, ideally, is this: I think artistic communities are important for fostering creativity, to have a bunch of people working together so new ideas can grow between them, people giving them back and forth... and the hardcore community should work like that.

Dd.: Right.

I.F.: I guess my last question is: what do you think the net result of the Refused experiment is? What's left after these last seven years, what consequences...

Dd.: I've thought a lot about that. When I first realized the potential of Refused's demise, which was over a year ago now, I started thinking about that, wondering what would Sweden be like without Refused, for example. I talked to friends about it, and a lot of them couldn't even visualize the concept, since we had been around for so long, and had such an impact. As far as the community we had in Umea, I always think our greatest achievement is what these people are going to go on to do now, after they've experienced this. We never had the same impact in the rest of Europe or in America as we did in Sweden, but there are a lot of people there who have witnessed the relentless passion with which we did that band, and played every show that was offered, and the passion with which we talked about the things we believed in; and I know that that will have results, and I hoping that somehow it will make Sweden a better place to live. And for me it's also the lifelong friendships; besides my family, I met everyone I know through Refused. For the last five years, I didn't work or go to school. I ate my mom's food and managed to get by on money from t-shirt sales, and I did nothing but Refused, so to put down the results of Refused's seven years would be a very big project... It's given me direction musically, it's taught me a lot about music, its function, how people react to it, and how people talk to you... I guess what I hope is that the records, especially that last record, the historical evidence of our band, will continue, and that hopefully the people who were in the band will carry on the same level of enthusiasm towards life and towards art in whatever we do from now on. The most important result is probably what we will manage to do in the future with what we learned.

I.F.: How do you feel about the way Refused broke up, in the middle of the tour...

Dd.: The thing was that we had decided what we were going to do, it was going to be a nice, peaceful breakup, we were going to do the rest of the tours, play a few more shows in Sweden, with the finale in Umea on New Year's Eve, and that was already decided when the tour collapsed. There was some bad blood, I think there's no bad feelings now...

I.F.: Do you feel like it would have been better for the sake of the mission of Refused, if you guys had made it through all the tours and finished the way you had planned?

Dd.: Well, you know, we never did anything right (laughs), and this totally makes sense in the grand scheme of things, for Refused to split up in some random town in America.

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the real protest is beauty.

Using the Mainstream Media

David: I just got allergic to the media, I thought they were lying fucking scumbags...

Inside Front: Yeah, I hate all those people. My take on that is that we only hurt ourselves and our project by trying to use those channels to reach people. Here, we just won't talk to those guys, you know? And my feeling is that it can't have been good for you guys to have to be talking to them all the time and have to be distracted from your real mission by them...

David: When we came out, we were on a mission, you know? It was like a crusade, we were going to bring vegetarianism, veganism, straight edge to Sweden, and we did, and it had an enormous result. But when I started getting sick of it, and decided I wasn't going to talk to them, I could come home from being out of town and people from the newspaper would be sitting in the kitchen talking to my mom, they'd just walk in, and start taking pictures and asking questions, they'd stop at nothing. At that point we weren't exactly the latest scoop, either; they just want a story, and they just search until they find it. And if they don't get the right answers from me, they'll take them from somebody else, but they'd still print my picture next to it. I saw that happen so many times, my words twisted and my face put next to things that I had nothing to do with... We were naive, definitely.

Inside Front: I think maintaining "media silence" is a fundamental part of establishing and concentrating on our own channels of communication.

David: Yeah, definitely. Like until now, I stopped doing interviews.

DENNIS

Speaking with Inside Front in February and April

Inside Front: Let's talk about the function of *fashion* in the Refused Party Program. At one point in the band's history, it seemed the idea was to present the band members dressed in a sort of stylish uniform... on the one hand, this challenged the visual expectations of hardcore kids, but on the other, we're all so obsessed with image, especially in a youth subculture like hardcore, that it seems dangerous to risk replacing one image with just another when you're trying to get people to abandon the pursuit of images altogether, to get them to go for real life. Youth subcultures and oppressed minorities have traditionally focused almost exclusively on image as a means of self-expression, since they're made to feel it's the only thing they have any control over. How do you think Refused's experiment with fashion worked out?

Dennis: I think a little bit of both—in one sense it did sort of work out that a lot of times people would remember the fact that we were playing a show because we stood out from the run-of-the-mill hardcore bands, but in another sense, as you mentioned, I guess a lot of people focused a lot on the fact that we were dressed nice or whatever. I think my initial idea was to present the band as a collective, a unit of people, of individuals, the idea being: here we have a program that we're all involved in together... trying to remove the star of the singer/rock star and make sure that people realized that Refused functioned as a unit, that it's not my band or anyone else's band but it's a group where everyone adds up to something.

IF: On one hand that makes sense, and it is exciting to see a group of people dressed in a uniform, but on the other hand that is how for example the Chinese Communist Party works, dressing everyone in unisex uniforms...

D: Oh yeah, yeah...

IF: ...so you are flirting with some scary stuff working with uniforms... was that intentional?

D: Yeah, a little bit, we had almost that uniform, like the Chinese Republican Army uniform, which wasn't really intentional, we wanted a strict but sort of a nice uniform... and also some of it has to do with my fascination with fashion—not with fashion, but with style, trying to look good.

[At this point Dennis and I talked for a while about how he became interested in dressing well as a way to defy expectations and prevent people from writing Refused off as just another bunch of extremist weirdos... then we talked for a while about how to keep revolutionary ideas and messages from being quarantined in the underground where they don't reach the people who need them, without getting sucked up and compromised by the mainstream media/corporations... Dennis explained how Refused had tried to find a middle route between the exclusive d.i.y. underground and the apolitical mainstream, and how this had brought them trouble from both sides... of course, all this was lost when my COINTELPRO-style phone tapping machine broke. I decided not to run over that territory again, since you can read about it in other Refused interviews if you want. So, here's the rest of our conversation, continued in April:]

IF: Well, I told you this retrospective will be called "The Realization and Suppression of Hardcore Punk," in keeping with the Situationists' idea that once you realize what is meaningful about an institution like punk rock or whatever, what human needs it exists to serve, you can transcend it, taking what was useful about it and leaving behind the aspects that prevented it from achieving its goals—being an institution in the first place being the biggest problem, of course. In the final communiqué, you wrote that you'd wanted to be the final nail in the coffin of popular music, but the challenge was too great for you. How had you hoped to destroy popular music from within?

D: First of all, we like to talk in terms of political rhetoric... well, we shouldn't really beat around the bush about the fact that I wrote all the manifestos and all the lyrics and stuff, and I wrote that final communiqué. For me, it's the realization that popular music—it's been fifty years of an industry that has brought us to where we are. The idea was to use popular music as a stepping stone to destroy it; like if you compare it to the French intellectuals during the '60's, they all had this idea that they were gonna be the intellectual elite...

IF: ...the last intellectuals...

D: ...yeah, the last intellectual elite, and as soon as the revolution comes their part will be played out and there won't be a need for an intellectual elite. I think my whole idea is that popular music is so restricted to the network of the big labels, and you are supposed to act as a rock star, how you are supposed to sound and look, and that whole agenda of "creativity" and "talent" and so on, how they're supposed to be limited to these few people... I think the destruction of popular music should be us realizing that this music, it's just *nothing*, it's not as creative as we want it to be. The importance of the "creative artist," the "suffering artist" or the creative idol should be destroyed and should instead be replaced by kinds of music that everyone can play and participate in...

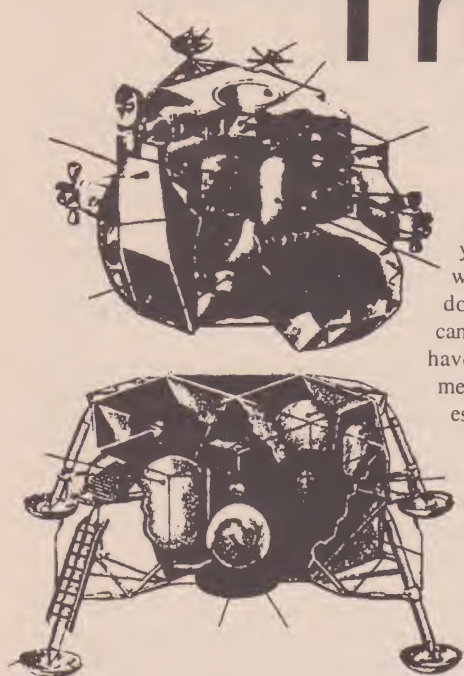
IF: ...like drumming in Africa, for example...

D: ...yeah, without the limitations of labels and videos, or even music, you know, like the music and the poetry of the creativity we should try to reach beyond popular music should be just *life*, you know. The new kind of music should just be *living*.

IF: So tell me what it would take for a band, or a group of French intellectuals, or anybody else, for that matter, to destroy the Spectacle from within...? Is that possible?

D: Well, I don't know, no one's succeeded, I don't think anyone's gotten close yet. But at the same time it's like if you're in a position where you actually can play music, or especially in a position like

The Refused



Refused where we actually *enjoyed* playing music, why not try to make the best of it? It's sort of like you're in the position where you know you're doing everything you can, within the power you have, within the preset media that you have, to establish this idea of a change, revolution... and at the same time you know that this pre-set limit and the medium you're working within isn't likely to change that much.

IE: Yeah, a lot of people think that

the ones who are willing to compromise are the ones that keep the system in place...

D: Well, yeah, but at the same time, if we're talking in terms of the Spectacle, there's nothing that goes outside of it—like you can be as do-it-yourself as you want to be, or as punk rock as you want, you'll still be part of the, uh...

IE: ...the system of identity and commodity...

D: ...yeah, the system of roles, the system of exchange, of producing and consuming...

IE: ...see, that's actually exactly what I'm talking about, I'm not drawing a distinction between d.i.y. and corporate compromise. Instead I'm saying, well... for example, Inside Front is a magazine where we sell "revolutionary ideas," so perhaps by doing that we're the ones who are providing the outlet, letting the steam off in a way that still takes place inside the exchange economy, for what would otherwise be a truly revolutionary energy. That's the danger that you and I and everyone like us faces.

D: Yeah, yeah—I totally understand, I sort of agree with that, like how punk rock has been a safe outlet for rebellion for all these years, it's always been like "well, you can always rebel within punk rock," it's sort have been a small Spectacle within the Spectacle, and you can always go back, after you've done your years of rebellion, instead of maybe demanding everything at once.

IE: It's a limited playground, you know?

D: Definitely. That's one of the fulfilling things about punk rock, that we can actually be in charge of the stuff that we're producing and consuming, and sort of be in charge of our lives on this limited playground... but at the same time you realize after a while that it is really limited, that it's sort of a safe rebellion, and then you come to the hard part, you know: are you going to go outside the punk rock community, try to infiltrate beyond that...

IE: And is that the way to go? You guys tried it, tell me what happened...

D: It's really hard to tell, because you don't want to sit and say "yeah, we changed so many people's minds," which I don't really think we did, but if you look at the last Refused record, and you look at all the ideas, all the lyrics and all the written stuff, all the clues that we leave behind... that record has sold over 30,000 copies, that's a lot of records,

a hopefully at least a percentage of those people have actually taken the time to find out what the ideas are that are driving us to do this. So in a sense, I think it can work... If your goals are set on maintaining the independence of the punk rock community then I think we failed miserably...

IE: But that by itself is a completely unambitious goal, right...

D: Yeah, I think so... but at the same time that's what the punk rock community has been for the last twenty years, it reached a point where everybody said "this is where we want punk rock to be, it shouldn't change from this"—

IE: —"how long can we tread water here"—

D: Yeah, exactly. And as soon as bands go outside that they start to get a lot of shit for it. Which is understandable if people think that they've found their ideal world... It's a really hard thing, because we still had all the punk rock ethics and then all of a sudden we had to make weird compromises. It wasn't not necessarily big things, just weird things, and we had to decide if this weird thing was worth reaching out to more people.

IE: I think there's a false dichotomy between either being d.i.y. or working within the mainstream, with those companies... I think there's got to be a third choice, a solution that no one has hit upon yet...

D: Yeah, I think so as well. The new project that we're doing, the new band, we're definitely trying to figure out a different solution for ourselves.

IE: A way to reach out to *everyone*, that is still d.i.y., in some sense. And I don't really know what that would be, but we need a way to not have an exclusive community, but an *expandable* autonomous zone, that's what I think.

D: In a way, we tried to work towards that with Refused, but didn't really succeed. I think with the new band I'm doing we're trying to find, as the Buddha would say, the middle path... if you're bold and daring enough, you can actually try to do something different, that nobody has done before.

IE: That's what punk is, really, or was... and will be again, right?

D: But it is really hard, because the music industry itself is really conservative, and as in the punk rock scene there's so many rules. Refused, we sort of got caught up in... well, one important aspect of Refused was that when we started the band, we didn't really know, it wasn't like the whole agenda and everything was there when we started the band, it was just like it just happened. Like the politics just sort of came along the way, and we're just like "holy shit, what's going on here?"

IE: "Fuck, we're a band on Equal Vision that hates capitalism!"

D: Yeah, exactly, that doesn't like Krishna people—or, I won't say Krishna people, but—that doesn't approve of Krishna "consciousness." What the fuck! But we all know how it is after you've done something and you change perspective and you try to sort of justify all the stupid things you did... We didn't set out to be the most political, anarchist, punk rock band, all those ideas, they were always there, but when we started we just wanted to sound like Gorilla Biscuits, which we failed with—

IE: —thank god you failed!

D: I mean, the first show we played, we played like four Gorilla Biscuits songs. That's where our heads were when we started the band. And all of a sudden I'm reading all this politics and all the lyrics are political and there's a bigger idea than to just play music and put out records...

IE: I wasn't going to ask this, but do you want to try to talk about why you think that your band and your scene evolved into thinking about these issues, whereas other bands that start out covering Gorilla Biscuits don't?

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Party Program

D: Seriously, I don't really know why that happened. I would say that a lot of it had to do with the fact that even from when the first mini-CD came out, all the lyrics were about politics...

IF: ...even though you didn't know anything about it.

D: Yeah, exactly, we knew that we hated capitalism, but we weren't really well-read about it, we were just angry and naive, like hardcore kids. But when I got into straight edge, the whole European tradition of it was so much more political. We had Man Lifting Banner, Nations on Fire, all those bands were political, so when I started writing to those people and trying to get involved in the European scene, I remember in '89 I did an interview with Man Lifting Banner and they sent me all this literature, and I was like, "wow, these guys are crazy, they know what's going on everywhere and they're so political," and that inspired me to do, like, a straight edge band that's political.

IF: There's a very different tradition of youthful rebellion in the U.S. from the radicalism in Europe, and that affects the way that hardcore plays out in both places. It's funny how kids not just in Europe but especially in places like Brazil get involved in an American rebellious thing and turn it into something revolutionary.

D: Yeah, when I started getting in touch with American straight edge kids and it turned out they didn't really know what was going on, I was surprised, and then afterwards I realized that all the straight edge kids that got political stopped calling themselves straight edge in the States, that's just like a general thing, if you start talking about politics you stop calling yourself straight edge, because it's such a different scene from what we were doing up here...

IF: See, I still call myself straight edge...

D: Oh, I still do...

IF: ...the idea being I guess to help this scene grow, for the same reason you do, but that is sort of a drawback in the U.S.: there's a sort of a "brain drain" of people leaving straight edge for "oh, I have a more educated identity now, I can't brush shoulders with the unwashed philistines..." [Dennis laughs] Ok, why don't we go on to another question here, before I run out of tape. If I ask you when and where you started to get your dance moves, are you going to tell me that it's just because you enjoy performing, and you wanted to start challenging people, and all that stuff, or do you have a more complicated conception of how your moves relate to rock and roll and James Brown and all that stuff?

D: I don't know, I probably could come up with something really pretentious and intellectual, but...

IF: I'm going to if you don't!

D: Let's face it, when I started, I always enjoyed—when I got up on stage I always went nuts. We talked about why I started dressing up and all that stuff, and I think the moves just came with that. And it was a whole challenge, a whole fuck you to the world of testosterone, and the macho ideals that hardcore all of a sudden was. I was like, this isn't really me, I mean, I am a sort of feminine, petite kind of guy—and I just started looking at all these performers that were feminine, and that challenged people so much, and offended people. And especially in a scene like this, where we're playing shows with a band like Madball, and then I go up and I'm all feminine and I do all these crazy moves... It's just one of those things, I just enjoy dancing around... you know, I used to take my t-shirt off, and be all hardcore—

IF: —I still do that, so I don't get my only shirt sweaty—

D: —I know, but for me it was just like why am I doing this? Because I've been looking at pictures from American bands that do this. And I'm like: this is not really me. I don't want to sport my tattoos and stuff. And then I started looking at James Brown videos, and trying to incorporate dance moves into punk rock. Because, you know, the revo-

lution of everyday life should be very sexual and very challenging. And also when you have a scene that's so puritanical, like the straight edge scene, so afraid of sexuality and everyone dresses up in big baggy clothes and it's totally genderless...

IF: Yeah, I hear soul music sometimes, and I wonder, why don't we ever sing about fucking?

D: Yeah, exactly—

IF: Not that it's the only thing in the world, but it's something in the world.

D: —rock music is very sexual, and it is very... primitive, I would say, and the whole idea of sexuality is so primitive, and just being sexual like that on stage is so in sync with what rock music was all about and punk rock could be all about...

IF: This leads to another question I was going to ask you. One of the gutsiest things I've seen a hardcore singer do, faking an orgasm—I mean, I'm assuming you were faking—

D: —yeah, I was!—

IF: —in the middle of song, in front of all these uptight machismo kids... now how did you get that idea?

D: I just did it on stage one night. That part of the song is the breakdown where everything becomes quiet, and one night I was just breathing really loud, and then I started faking an orgasm, and everyone in the band was like "that was so fucking crazy." And you could tell how people reacted, they were just like, what is going on. It just stuck there, because I really liked it; people were actually really offended by it, and it was so good.

IF: Yeah, that's what I want, is to contact people with that kind of closeness, you know? When I play music to people, I almost wish I could make love to each one of them, and find out what they're like with their barriers down, but I can't so I play music and try to get to them like that... so, here's a question: when you'd fake that orgasm, would you actually try to do it in exactly the same way as when you are making love to someone, or did you find yourself *performing*?

D: I found myself performing, a bit, because I'm not that loud, I'm more... yeah, I'm not that loud when I have orgasm. So I was definitely performing it a bit, but I was trying to work it up so you could hear that I got excited—and some nights, I got really, not into it in the sense that I got excited, you know, but I got really into it, I was really caught up in what I was doing. It was performing, but I tried to take that emotion of the orgasm and sort of amplify it.

IF: So would you ever go out on a limb, and have an orgasm in front of a crowd of people?

D: I don't know... that's one of those questions I'd have to think about for a while!

IF: That's taking the abstract idea and making it real, terrifying...

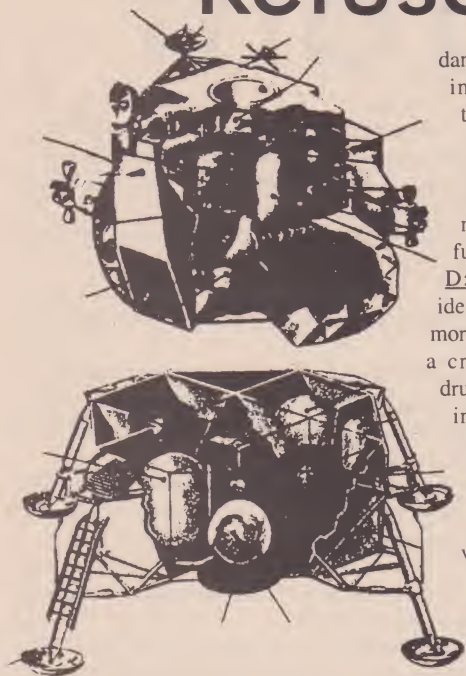
D: Definitely, definitely—

IF: It also is the difference between performance and real life, the whole question of how valid performance is.

D: Exactly.

IF: Let's go on to something else: prerecorded music. I know that was the idea of some of the other people in the band, but I want to get your feedback about it. I remember when you played in Greensboro, you were giving this really personal, inspiring speech about seizing the moment, not just waiting for change; and in the background the tape was playing a woman singing dramatically, and it totally manipulated my emotions. On the one hand, I was responding emotionally to what you were saying, on the other hand I was being manipulated by the tape, and then at the same time the whole thing almost made a joke out of the seriousness of what you were saying. That happened with your dancing, too, like you'd be doing this frivolous hand-clapping

Refused: A retrospective



dance while you're singing this really emotional protest song. Tell me about how you guys tried to use melodrama and manipulation with Refused.

D: I think the whole idea was to make it into more of a show. So there's a crazy intro with the drumbeats, and me going up singing by myself, and then the band blasts in, and trying to make it so it builds, and the violins come in... Just to have all these different elements that are totally unexpected, because it's so not punk

rock to do that... to make people think "what's happening now? what is this? why are they doing this to me?" To use the surprise in the songs to make people react in different ways...

IF: Here's a question about that—do you think "the shape of punk to come" should be more one of "shows," or of not being a show but being real, if that makes sense... or do you think there's not a distinction between performance and actual action? Should we work more towards performances, that separate the performers from the audience, for example through technological means such as samples, or should we be working in the opposite direction?

D: I think our plan was... well, neither, and... everything. I think the shape of punk to come should be, certainly the unexpected, but at the same time, you can use mediums that are so ordinary and have been used a million times before, to create all these... I think the shape of punk to come is not about the aesthetics of punk rock, it's about the emotions around it more than the actual aesthetics. The way you go about creating your punk rock masterpiece, it should be more about the emotion, I mean, "The Shape of Punk to Come" for Refused, it was like "let's do this album and give everything we've got," with the title it wasn't really like we wanted people to make records that would sound like the Refused record, because that would be such a waste of time and energy. We just wanted to show people us going all out, that you can do crazy, mad things with your music and not let anything stop you from realizing what you want to do—not let the aesthetics of punk rock stop you from creating what you want to create.

IF: So what about the melodrama and the contradictions in your performances, though, like when you were speaking seriously and there's this manipulative sample playing in the background as if I'm watching the end of a bad movie? Did you guys do that deliberately, did you think much about it or did it just come out that way?

D: I think a lot of it just came out that way, because when I get up on stage I try not to say the same thing twice; you tend to a lot, because when you play thirty shows in a row it's hard to vary what you're saying, but yeah, I think it just came out that way. Also when you hear that voice, and the music comes on and gets really emotional and bombastic, then it's easy to talk that way when you have that background. It's easy to go with the flow and start talking about stuff you might not say otherwise.

IF: But do you think there is a tension there between man and machine, between Dennis the human being and this CD player playing this prerecorded, synthetic music to people?

D: A little bit, yeah. Because for me personally, I don't like, I was sort of against, not really against the idea, because it was a part of the project around the record, but I don't like electronic music at all. If it were up to me, I wouldn't have done it. But since it was a project that we wanted everyone to be involved on all these different levels, and since that was Jon's big thing, that he did all that stuff, we tried to incorporate that the best we could, tried to make it a part of Refused, so that everyone in Refused had his different role, and everyone could express himself according to what he wanted to do and not let the limitations of what we were before or what the world expected us to be become a hindrance in any way.

IF: That was what was significant about the record, was that—most punk bands, they get new ideas, they get new influences and they stop playing punk rock, or they can't work with each other and they break up. But you guys all had different ideas and aesthetics, and somehow took all that stuff and brought it all into punk rock, which is a very generous thing, to take these ideas back to the place you've been, rather than to leave it for them... and also to be able to work together and make music even when you have different aesthetic ideas, that's amazing.

D: It is—and it's hard. In a sense, that's what made this record really good, and also, that's what made us realize that we couldn't go on doing it much longer... because it came to a point where we realized we were four different people striving in four different directions, and you can have all this tension, and frustration and anxiety... and creativity, and make it into something really exciting. And after we did the record we realized "we're not going to be able to work like this, we have to come up with an idea of how we're going to work together," which never happened... but you know what I mean, the whole tension and everything made it really exciting.

IF: That's our idea as anarchists, too, I guess, that we could create a society where everyone contributes and it isn't just one person's plan, and it actually would turn out to be more exciting than a society that comes down to a few people telling everyone else what to do.

D: Exactly.

IF: Like if you look at Refused as an anarchist collective, maybe not a smoothly running one, but compare it to Madonna's band—that's not a collective—

D: —that's a dictatorship. We definitely tried to make it so the last record was 25% of everyone in the band, we had all these different roles, tried to keep the feeling of a collective, and still make sure that everyone got to do their part...

IF: ...right, and that everyone is responsible for each other's ideas, and bringing them into the world, and for their beliefs, even if they aren't ready to be. OK, I don't think you ever answered the question I was trying to ask, but all the answers you gave were good, so let's go on. I don't know if you're going to like this question or not, but... there was something about Refused that seemed deliberately pretentious. Not just in the fancy dance moves or intellectual references or language, but in the spirit of everything you did. And my question is: pretentiousness as revolutionary? or what?

D: [laughs] ...I think it's a funny question! It's good though. Refused—it was so pretentious! But it was not pretentious in a way that it was stuck up pretentious, like "we know so much better than you, and we have the right to be pretentious because we are these great artists..." It was more pretentious in a way like... we wanted so damn much, you know, and we wanted to explain, and expand, and create things that were so out of our reach... it became really pretentious, because we wanted so much, I think... does that make sense?

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IE: I think so—like you're overreaching yourselves, and you have to be like—

D: —always pushing it too hard, making it... like making the language really intellectual, just because I wanted to write essays that were pages and pages, and instead we had to adapt everything to the medium given to us: the record, the music, the booklet. Also, when you come up with the idea of just having a new idea, already there we have a lot of pretension. Just like writing a song like "New Noise," there you go.

IE: I guess perhaps deliberately being pretentious is a way to make yourself feel free to do that stuff.

D: And also deliberately being pretentious is a way to control it, so you don't become pretentious because you think that you're so amazing or you think that you're so great, you think you're so smart... a lot of the time being really pretentious makes you able to laugh, laugh about it, to criticize yourself and just say "what the fuck!" Which is important, because I hate that when people become, like, "I am a big artist, and no one understands me..."

IE: They're gobbled up by their own image of themselves.

D: Exactly, and it's so much easier to do it sort of over the top, so that you can look at it from an outsider's point of view...

IE: ...and protect yourself from it by making a joke out of it.

D: Well, not making a *joke* out of it, because it was dead serious, you know?

IE: No, what I mean by "making a joke out of it" is when you act like a rockstar, you're *joking* about being a rockstar, in order to be able to be dead serious about the other things... because if you really are a rock star, then all the politics become a joke.

D: Yeah, exactly.

IE: I thought of a question about what we were talking about before we got in the pretension issue. A lot of bands, maybe everybody starts the band being equally creative, but then some people work harder than other people and end up eventually being the voices in the band. How did you guys in Refused manage to keep everyone still contributing?

D: I think just by doing a lot of records where it was just one or two people that did everything. Going through the process of the first couple of records it was only me and David doing everything, and then realizing, being on tour for so long, and becoming such a tight unit, we actually... Well, I think a lot of it is that like, David is a total control freak. David wants to be in charge. If it was up to David, he would have done all the lyrics, all the layout, every riff, and recorded everything himself.

IE: You know, when we first met in person in Belgium, we were hanging out and we hadn't really broken the ice yet... and I was complaining about Ink and Dagger, some completely predictable stupid hardcore gossip, David just interrupted me, and he said "you know, I wish I could build an army of robots to do my bidding." That broke the ice, and we could talk as real human beings after that, he'd broken us out of the cliché. But I never really thought about what he said until just now.

D: Like the "Songs to Fan the Flames of Discontent," it was David's work; I mean, everyone was involved, but David wrote most of the songs, and David was, like, in charge in charge of what we were going to do. And I think he and I realized that if we wanted this band to function, if we wanted everyone to be happy, we were going to have to make sure that we could use everyone's talents. Because we'd done all the, like, I wrote all the songs on the first demo because I was the only one who knew anything about hardcore, we'd done all that, and we decided let's try to make a record where everyone is equally involved.

IE: But how did you get them to be equally involved?

D: It was really easy—we started writing all the songs, and practicing, and as soon as we had some songs—everything that is on the record in terms of layout and politics, and all the lyrics I started sketching out way before the record was done. I was like these are the issues I want to talk about... and as soon as we started to have all the songs finished, our roles sort of fell into place, it was so obvious what we were all going to do, it wasn't even forced in any way, or trying to make people do anything. When we started recording the album, everyone just knew what their role was.

plagiarism: "I stole this scrapbook from you but it doesn't matter because you stole it too."

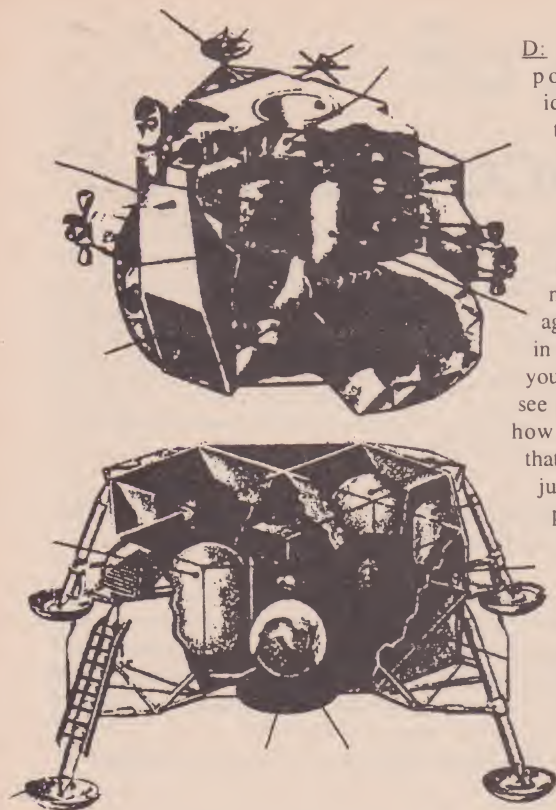
IE: Let's talk about the function of plagiarism in the Refused Party Program. Most of your ideas, slogans, even the visual images were borrowed from other sources, and introduced—or reintroduced—into hardcore. And the music is revolutionary and new in the ways it combines old ideas, but it's doing that just by recontextualizing old ideas. What's your ideological stance on plagiarism?

D: I'll quote Guy Debord: "Plagiarism is necessary. All progress depends upon it."

IE: All progress?

D: Well, yeah, most progress... we can adjust that a little bit! But what we have here is all these great ideas; and if you find a thing that is a great idea, you want to take it, use it, and make other people aware of it. I think that's pretty much how all music and all political ideas are created, when you take something that already exists and try to adjust it a little bit, put your personal touch on it. And since everyone has different preferences about a text or a song, it always comes off differently. I think a lot of people were just like "man, it's just a big '60's rip off," but—and in a way it is—but if you look at it in the context of where the record came out, in what time and scene it came out, how it came out, how the whole product came to be, it's nothing like anything has ever been before. But if you start taking out sentences and riffs and structures of course you can sort of take everything apart and figure out where we stole it from, where the idea came from. But I think that's how it is with everything. You find these great ideas and you just try to make them into your own ideas, adjust them to your own life and your own background and experiences. I think the greatest idea... one of my favorite singer/songwriters, Phil Ochs, he said that the perfect political fighter or whatever should be a mix of Elvis Presley and Che Guevara. There's something that people can relate to and at the same time there's something totally different—I mean, what if Elvis Presley all of a sudden would start talking socialist politics, it would be insane! And that's how we feel that we're trying to... I mean, we're in this scene where everything is a certain way, and we do this record and we sound really different and we look really different and we talk really different, but at the same time people sort of can relate to it and understand what's going on.

IE: Now on the one hand, you're breaking down the idea of intellectual property—that's an anarchist idea, that ideas belong to everyone and you don't necessarily have to always sign a dead white man's name to everything. On the other hand, it's a very postmodern thing to say there's nothing new in the world, and so everything we do is just going to be an ironic version of something that's been done before. And I don't think that's what the Refused record was, but I see a lot of that, though, even in hardcore styles where we're always drawing on old fashions, looking backwards... and I'm just waiting for somebody to come up with something new.



anew?

D: I think the only thing that we can do is... the thing is, we have to break out of the time/space settings that are set for us, and I don't think we can do it by just style, or manifestos, or music. I think that creating your own history, uniting theory into practice, has to happen on a way bigger level. And seriously, it's not really that important if we're using '40's style-clothes again, that's just inevitable in the Spectacle that everything repeats itself and there are all these roles we're supposed to play... there has to be a change in the bigger picture, an all-out revolution, that will hopefully destroy all these silly roles and destroy all these silly clichés that we turn into, believing that we have multiple choices...

IE: And that would be the *beginning* of history, since history as we've known it has already ended.

D: Exactly.

IE: OK, I'm with you, awesome—give me a black mask! [laughter] OK, I have one more question, and it's about Final Exit. I finally figured out what I love most about Final Exit: Final Exit, for me,

D: That is a post modern idea, that history stopped, and we're just repeating everything... which I don't necessarily agree with, but in a lot of senses you can actually see it happening, how everything that comes up is just people repeating old ideas.

IE: So how do we destroy that old, dead history that lies on us like a weight, and start history from scratch,

and I imagine it was for you guys too, is like a guilty pleasure. We're all programmed from growing up in the mainstream to have all these stupid desires, like I can't help but love the American 1950's rebel image, like James Dean, I have a fucking leather jacket left over from when I was a punk kid, you know, and I actually feel kind of cool when I wear it, even though that's dumb as fuck! Similarly, as hardcore kids we all get a kick out of singing about being stabbed in the back, even though we know it's ridiculous. I listen to the first Final Exit, and it sounds like a sort of "guilty pleasure" for Refused... I mean, it's stupid as fuck to be like "you stabbed me in the back, I'm gonna kill you," but it's also like you're affirming and embracing that side of yourself, like "OK, I have this ridiculous desire, and I'm going to celebrate it rather than being ashamed."

D: Yeah, I think we realized that a lot of it was really silly, but we loved it. We figured why not do this, and go balls out, and sort of try to make people realize that it is really silly, and at the same time make it kind of smart and funny. It was so fucking cool to be on tour with Final Exit, it was so awesome to just get up on stage, play bass, X-up and jump around. And just being such a cliché, not even a parody of myself, just to be such a straight edge cliché—it was so much fun to make fun of ourselves and the things that we loved.

IE: I think that's really positive, too, to celebrate even ridiculous desires, too...

D: Oh, definitely, you should live life according to your desires and not worry about whether what you're doing is the right thing or the cool thing...

IE: ...although the problem is, we are all programmed to want all these fucked up things, like that piece I wrote for your book about all the power dynamics bullshit that is programmed into our sexuality—there's that difficult intersection between wanting to remake yourself into something better, like wanting to become someone who looks at meat and doesn't think of it as food, doesn't get hungry for it, and at the same time still wanting to celebrate who you are and accept that, be proud of it.

D: That is a tough thing. But every once in a while, you have to indulge in nostalgia, in that whole role, that whole sense of identity that is really stupid, but once in a while you just have to go balls out and be like "aaaaah!"

IE: And maybe that's away to defuse those desires, to harmlessly play out that programming without being trapped by it.

D: Like I was with my friends in Separation and this band Eclipse, I played a show with my acoustic guitar, and all the kids in Eclipse are really young—and they were all X-ing up and being really straight edge, and I just X-ed up. I was sitting there with my acoustic guitar with my turtleneck on and I was X-ed up, it was so hardcore, we were sitting in the backstage room like "Where's the marker!", you know? And once in a while you have to do that.

They come by night, cruising in their uniforms and their dances down the damp city streets, swinging along like mad weekend lovers to the stereo sound of liberation. They come as witnesses, spectators and participants, crazy wild and drunk on love and noise. The speakers explode and we are blinded by a wall of sound, screams, beats. The movement flows through the room as the band is on fire, flying across the stage. Naive, beautiful yet serious and scarred. The skinny, feminine singer touches his lips in a signal and gesture of communication and revolt. Wisdom flows like water and this new game, this new beginning, is as relentless and hard as the bullet the C.I.A. killed Kennedy with. Two thousand years of convention all gone up in smoke with a stroke of the burning guitar. Kristofer gently holds, caressing it as if it is his baby, for tonight it is. The beat hypnotizes as the heat is felt through the room and we all take part knowing that revolution never felt more alive. David looks out over the stage and with the twist of a stick takes us to places we never even thought existed where we believe and know for real that this is the time to live, fight, steal, steal a kiss and eagerly join in. Get down, they scream, and we all get down, we all get with it and we take the plunge because

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IE: I've actually never X-ed my hands in the entire ten years I've been straight edge...

D: Aww! Yeah, I've been straight edge for ten years, and I did it a lot of times, I did it at the last Refused show, even!

IE: I don't actually remember that, I must not have noticed...

D: I did! It was crazy, because when we played our last show in Sweden, last summer—we didn't know it was gonna be the last show then—we knew that Jon had started drinking... so me and Ulf were like really upset, not really upset, but we were like, fuck, you know? So me, David and Ulf X-ed up on the last show we did in Sweden, and I X-ed up on the last show we ever did.

IE: Well, the tape has run out, so I guess those are the last words of the last Refused interview...

This final piece is from a letter David sent me. It was the last thing I heard from him before disaster struck in both our lives and we fell out of contact. I feel strange about putting it in here, partly because I haven't been able to ask him about it, and also because I feel like it's dangerous to take things that are important in your own life and mass-produce them. There is a real temptation for us journalist types to cannibalize everything from our private lives—turning every moment of passionate living, every piece of unique correspondence into public property, preserved freeze-dried and soulless in the mass media—as if that would make them somehow more real, more significant. All the same, I'm going to print it here, because it sums up for me everything I'd like to say about Refused but can't... and if I'm going to really try to get my feelings about them across to each one of you, I'm going to have to take some risks.

On the last night in Sweden before leaving for the states in the summer of '96 we played this festival in the south and lots of our friends were there, some came with us and some had been out traveling and met up with us there, it was a beautiful night and we hadn't started falling apart yet, that began at the end of the US tour, we were unstoppable and in love with ourselves and the world, there were about a thousand people at our show going insane and my brother was there, carrying our stuff, taking care of troublemakers. At the end of the show Dennis told everyone we were going swimming and when we'd loaded all our shit we all ran, followed by a bunch of kids, down to the beach, got naked, all of us, girls and boys, into the sea. Me, Jonas (Bloodpath), Dennis, My brother Storknasse and Kris weren't in a hurry so when we got down there everyone was already going nuts in the water, way past midnight, almost full moon, it was beautiful, all these kids having a great time and none of them would have been then and there if it wasn't for the band. Anyway, Jonas was hyperactive as usual and decided he was gonna tie his towel like a cape round his neck and run up and down the beach until he couldn't walk anymore, which he did, and the rest of us followed. If you've never felt the cold wind against your naked body you haven't lived, we raced up and down that beach until we could run no longer and then we dove into the sea. An hour later we said goodbye to everyone and left for the airport, and for the rest of that year (178 shows) whenever I felt like none of it mattered anymore, I thought of Dennis, Jonas, My brother, Kris and myself runnin' along the water like crazy horses with capes tied, waving from our necks and diving in to the still warm water in the middle of the night. Still makes me smile.

Phil Ochs stated firmly "If I have something to say I'm going to say it now."

So here it is. The deck was dealt and we all lost. As we sit tight and enjoy the soap operas that are designed to keep us bleeding out of our eyes and keep us nodding and sighing, there is still hope in the petrol bomb, and in it, the revolution. For in the destruction and the overthrowing there is the certainty of salvation. We need to destroy the museum and its old artifacts, we need to tear down the power structure that enslaves and then in revolution we can live and be alive. Yes, this is our hymn and our praise to the brave and bold stranger in the night, to the fed up worker and the angry wife. Hope, revolution and dedication. Fight fire with fire and everything will burn. *Yeah.*

it feels good and when Jon, heavenly looking, stares into our eyes we know that nothing is wrong, that we will walk on water and look at each other with amazement. It's a night of magic and every note hits like a hammer. The smell of perspiration and perfume is flowing through the air as we hold each other tight, moving along to the manifesto. This could be the shape of punk to come, liberation theology in practice, togetherness spiting the dividers and rulers, the sum of our parts forming the gag in the mouth that voices the status quo, woven into fabric with every last thread of our defiance, sewn to fit like the shirt on my back. Or it could be just another sleepless midnight punk romance.



Introduction to Brazilian hardcore... and the EZLN:

SELF CONVICTION /

I don't remember how I first came to be in touch with people in the Brazilian hardcore scene, but I've learned more about life (and corresponding political issues) in the rest of the world from my communication with them than I could have from a thousand books. That's one of the greatest things about the hardcore network, for me: the people it puts me in contact with who share some of my dreams and beliefs but have entirely different perspectives to offer. I thought that instead of being selfish, I should share their perspective with you guys, too, so here's an interview with members of two of the more active Brazilian hardcore bands. One of the most useful elements of this, for people in the USA and Europe, should be the Latin American perspective on the EZLN...

The bands... and their community.

Please introduce the members of the bands to us. What other projects have each of you done, both in and outside of hardcore? What are your day to day lives like? What do you do to survive?

Frederico: I sing for Point of No Return which is virtually an extension of Self Conviction, almost the same band with 4 members of SC. Wagner and myself take part in the Zapatista Solidarity Committee. This Committee was formed when some members of the Zapatista Front, which is a civil committee to support the EZLN, came to Brazil in order to establish contacts with Brazilian progressive popular forces: trade unions, socialist parties, progressive sectors of the Catholic Church and mainly with the Landless Workers Movement (MST). Thus the Committee was formed with the support of many different sectors of Brazilian left. The aim of the Committee is to make the cause for the Zapatista known around here; to pressure Brazilian and Mexican government to loosen visa demands from one country to another, so the exchange of workers between the two nations may increase, making the struggle for self determination of the local population as unified as possible; to gain support and financial help for the zapatista army; and finally, try to organize an American Zapatista congress in December '99 in a Brazilian city (Belem

do Para), which is in the north of the country, near the Amazon. I organize hardcore shows and eventually tours for foreign bands.

Tarcisio: The members of Self Conviction are: Wagner, vocals, 28; He's unemployed for over a year and a half, and doesn't know what to do anymore since his money is over!! The present situation in Brazil forces workers to undergo very low wages and lots of demands since there is so much unemployment. If you don't take the job... well, they replace you within a few hours. Wagner helps organizing most of the shows and activities concerning hardcore. He also takes part in the Zapatista Solidarity Committee, just mentioned above. Alexandre, vocals, 24; He works from 8 to 5, studies English, practices martial art Jiu-jitsu. He also sings for another 2 bands; Jeferson, drums, 24; He's the main reason for the end of the band. He has 2 children and live in a very poor situation, living in the back of his parent's house. Being the drummer, he actually had no drums, no cymbals, nothing at all!! His last pair of sticks were lost in our last show so... he just couldn't afford the band anymore so we decided to break up. He works from 8 to 5 but has a real low wage (about US\$500 to feed 2 kids, his wife and himself). If you'd like to know how the majority of Brazilian people lives, consider Jeferson's life. Andre, guitar, 23; He is in his last year of Psychology, loves Tai-chi-chuan and works provisionally at the University. Juninho, bass, 20; He is in his third

year of Biology and works from 9 to 6 in a Vegan Food Store (the first one in Brazil!!!!). He also plays guitar for other bands and takes part in a local group similar to Food Not Bombs. And finally myself, Tarcisio, 22. I work from 7 to 4, and I have a reasonable wage for Brazilian standards. I share an apartment with 3 other friends. At night I study (second year of Letters). I also play in other bands and I'm making my first attempt of translating a book (Animal Liberation) into Portuguese. I leave my apartment about 6 in the morning and I'm back only about 11:30 at night. I use the time spent in public transport (about 3 or 4 hours a day) to read, so when I'm not too tired I read a lot. I usually make exercises between 5 and 7 (after work - before school). So... my everyday life is not exactly what I expect it to be. Yet I should not complain. I'm pretty lucky cos I have a good job - I work at an Institution for Blind People where we produce didactic books in Braille for blind students, so at least I'm not spending my time to give profit for any multi-greed corporation - and also cos I have the opportunity to study in a free University. In Brazil, only 6% of the population are able to go to Universities. Many people don't even conclude the elementary school. Here, everyone is used to start working with 14 years old to complement their parents' wages. In the rural areas the average age to start working is even less. 7-year-old-kids work hard in sugar cane plantations, coal mines and in other rural activities, getting

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wages like one dollar a day or less. Slavery can be found not only in our history books... But back to my personal life, during the weekends I practice with the bands (usually 2 hours of rehearsal for each band), hang out with my friends, go to the shows, and that's it.

How did you all become interested in hardcore? Please describe how it first came into your lives, and why you decided to get involved with it. Also - if you can, please offer a short history of the development of the Brazilian hardcore scene, from its origins to the present.

Tarcisio: In the late 80's and early 90's, we were all involved with "alternative" music at some level (some of us in punk, others in metal). Around '92, we met each other in an anarchist group called Libertarian Youth (except Juninho, who joined the group later), in which 90% of the kids were involved with hardcore. That's where it begun to most of us. In that time, we used to play in other bands: Andre and myself played in Personal Choice and also in a grindcore band with Alexandre, called No Conformity. Wagner and Jeferson formed Positive Minds. The straight edge scene actually started to get bigger here around 1994. Before that there was no "scene" if you know what I mean. There were many punx, hardcore kids but no good structure at all. Then more shows started to be organized, with more communication, labels, bands, fanzines and so on. The roots of Brazilian hardcore scene are the old punk bands in the early 80's: Olho Seco, Clera, Ratos de Poro, Inocentes, Fogo Cruzado etc. Many of these bands broke up, some of them started doing metal (RDP), others became more rock-oriented

(Inocentes). In the late 80's and early 90's new bands started to come up. Our best influences come from this time: Leucopenia (RIP), No Violence, IHZ (RIP), Rot, Acio Direta etc. Today I think the hardcore scene reached its best phase. We have a good structure: several bands, some labels, good shows (about 2 per month with an average of 200 hundred people in each - sometimes more, sometimes less), and good communication with people from other places in Latin America, the US, Europe, and Asia.

It is clear from your writing in the Self Conviction CD and your politicized approach to D.I.Y. hardcore that you've done a lot of studying and thinking about hierarchy, anarchy, capitalism, revolution, and other philosophical/political issues (how's that for a fucking generalization! sorry). What are some of the sources of information and inspiration you've drawn on from outside of the hardcore scene - i.e. books, magazines, perhaps movies, collectives or historical figures and movements...

Tarcisio: I wouldn't say we did so much studying but we sure did a lot of think-

ing. Actually, the writings in the CD came rather from many discussions we usually have among ourselves and with other friends about political issues. Also because, in the last 8 years (since we committed ourselves to change the world!), we came across many different theories and we felt always influenced by them at some level. Personally, I found myself interested in communism and anarchism first, then veganism, eastern religion and so on. Each of these theories has different concepts of revolution, each comes with different solutions for ending misery and injustice. The writings in the CD came also from an internal process of confronting these antagonistic theories. Such conclusion is not the ultimate one for, I know well, there is much more to learn. Specifically, we had a song that used the word "revolution" and we felt a bit uncomfortable of talking about it, since it is such an abstract word for most of the kids. This is usually taken as something too distant, too far from our reality. And most bands that use it, do it because it is "cool." They are so eloquent but they sound so untrue! We wanted to show that revolution for us is something real, not abstract, so we decided to try to



put it in details, not in general, vague terms, that does not contribute to anything unless to showing how radical you are. Yet the text isn't complete at all, since it does not go in details about the process of revolution. This is the point in which most doubts arise. I have many ideas of how a revolution could take place in rural areas (the Zapatistas are a living example) but within the cities the problem is much deeper. It is something which I still have no concrete opinion and which I intend to study a bit more to come in with some consistent conclusions.

We used to read a lot about anarchism, mainly while we took part in Libertarian Youth. Some of the authors which certainly influenced our views were: Errico Malatesta from Italy and Tolstoi from Russia, giving two completely different approaches to anarchism; Bakunin and Mackno from Russia (Mackno was one of the main characters of a big anarchist community started after the October Revolution in USSR, later smashed as counter-revolutionary...), Ghandhi from India and Thoreau from the US (non-violence and civil disobedience), George Woodcock's compilation of anarchist writings, and Noam Chomsky from the US. Chomsky is probably one of our greatest influences. We also have read some writers (which most of them you probably never heard of, because they are from Brazil, Uruguay and other latin American countries) like Eduardo Galeano, Leo Huberman from USA, Caio Prado Jr., and Celso Furtado. Their books gave me a good comprehension about the history of humanity (most of them from an economic perspective, since they are so much influenced by Marx): from the ancient civilizations, the Middle Age and feudalism, mercantilism, colonization, the development of capitalism, and so on until the present situation. Some of them gives more attention to Latin America, so we can hold a good comprehension of what the hell happened around here for us to live in such a fucked up place. Noam Chomsky, again, offers in his books a great and wide view of the current situation all around the world.

The Zapatista uprising inspires us a lot. There is some good

books about it (one of them is called Zapatistas - Documents of the New Mexican Revolution - it covers the initial six months after the uprising). It gives us a whole new perspective of struggle, different from all the previous leftist guerrilla militias of the 60's and 70's in Latin America. We also try to keep informed about what's happening throughout the world to identify the real sources of the conflicts: the situation in Africa (civil wars, starvation), Middle East (the problem of Israel, petroleum issue), American Imperialism and so on. Usually what we learn through common media is partial news with right-wing overtones, so we are very suspicious towards it.

And finally, Andre and myself also like to read something of Eastern Philosophy. Mostly Taoism (Tao Te King) and the Vedas.

How important do you think the actual art of making music should be to "political" hardcore bands? Is there something radical about making innovative, challenging music in itself, or is the radical message more important than the art of making emotional music, in your eyes?

Tarcisio: Music, like many other kinds of art, may reveal so much aggression, intensity, frustration, happiness in itself that no words could express in a better way. For myself, the art of making music is itself political or revolutionary when, through its intensity and originality, it inspires other people not to follow the standard mostly done by others, but to create a new unique style that truly expresses their own self. I don't think Self Conviction is really innovative. We try to put some rap and hip hop influences in our music but we don't care a lot about the artistic side of the band. We simply play the music we like the most, that flows naturally from our experience (and that our skills enable us to do), and we rely a lot on our message. However I feel that the art of making music in political bands can be really important when it's innovative and challenging, for it reinforces the message. I personally like that kind of band which makes you feel like: "I want to take a machine gun and blow the president's head off" or something like

that. I mean, I'm not saying that the good bands are the ones which make you feel angry, specifically, but those who makes you angry or happy, whatever, but actually motivate and inspire you not to be a passive individual.

At least one of you has been to the United States. Offer your perspectives on the differences in hardcore scenes and society in general between the two nations.

Frederico: The most striking difference, which we can perceive immediately, is that your scene is much richer than ours. In most places that I've been in the US, hardcore kids came usually from the white middle class and it seemed to me that the poor and oppressed kids sometimes have no possibility to identify with hardcore at all, since most bands and zines are always wasting time with subjects which seem superfluous for a person who has to worry about surviving, and thus does not see in hardcore a source of inspiration. Here in Brazil, since the early 80's, the hardcore-punk scene was always composed by young kids from poor neighborhoods, that see in this scene a way to get rid of the accumulated anguish from the oppression of everyday life. Everyone in the US is more potential consumer than people here (who I already think are pretty much consumers). When I was in the US, I was impressed with so many needless paraphernalia that my friends accumulated inside their cars. It seems that even those involved with hardcore are not able to escape from their "fate" of growing up as compulsive consumers. Everyone is eating all the time, in the streets, in the cars, anywhere, and there are so many fat people!

Here our basic structure is much weaker. When there is a show, the organizers usually rent the drums and the amps, since most bands do not own them. Brazilian bands barely make tours around here because everyone works, and once you leave your job to go on tour, you will take a long time (six months or perhaps more) to find another one. In the US, everyone that plays in a band quits their job when leaving on tour and then,

when they come back, they are used to finding another one quite easily.

American population is too close-minded in itself, and they have minimum knowledge of "outside" world. They think they are a kind of "chosen people by Dog" or some similar stupidity and thus they ignore utterly the rest of the world. I was impressed when I saw in a local TV news, that they had a section entitled "the world in 59 seconds", that is, during 1 hour of journalism, only 59 seconds were assigned for external news. It must be very helpful for the ones in power that the average American citizen keeps completely alienated from what happens in the rest of the world, while simultaneously extremely busy trying to find out what his neighbor has been doing.

American hardcore kids reflect these kind of xenophobic isolation, since they don't know what happens in hardcore scenes all around the world and take everything that comes from outside the US boundaries as a mere imitation of Americans, and not as a legitimate cultural manifestation. It would be just the same if I considered the samba and bossa nova present in the music of people like Stan Getz, Miles Davis, Herbie Hancock and even Beck, Beastie Boys and Cibo Mato as a mere imitation of Brazilian music. An American friend of mine who had been here some time ago could not understand how, among our local straightedge scene, Nations on Fire (a sxe band from Belgium) is perhaps as popular as Youth of Today, and he could not accept how an old European band which he never heard of could be more popular than an American band.

Another striking difference is what we consider Left and what you consider Left. The Left around here is composed by all the sectors of society which see as the source of our system's problems the whole capitalist way of production and organization of society, and which see a radical change as the only way out, be it through reforms (fight for power of political parties etc...), or be it from radical and integral changes (armed fight, social mobilization, revolution and so on). The ways to reach this

point, where a man does not oppress another man, vary greatly but the class war is a reality widely accepted. For what I saw in the US, those who fit in the so-called Left cannot see the problem the way it is. Their main aim is to struggle for feminism, ecology, racial equality, animal liberation (which we could say are struggles for political correction) and others struggles that, despite being logically very important ones, are not the root of the problem. Racial tension, for instance: it is clear for me that it is extremely useful for North-American elite to foment racial tension among American citizens, making those who should be aware that their problems are caused by the dominant class actually think that their problems are caused by other "races". The American Left is not aware of the class war intrinsic to our society, but the elite which controls the media and indoctrinates the population is.

Third World Hardcore.

Why is it important to you to identify yourselves as "Third World Hardcore"? Explain the significance of this.

Tarcisio: "Third World" implies many things. First of all, it means we live in a completely different reality than you do. From our personal lives to the hardcore scene, everything is different between you and us. To put it in very general terms, "Third World" means we face a much harder situation than you do and we're so proud of it not because we are proud of being fucked up (I guess no sane person is proud of being fucked up) but because we are proud of our efforts in creating a hardcore scene despite the whole adverse situation. Before I come with details, let me give you two examples: one kid from Poland wrote us (Point of No Return) and asked to release our band there in tape version. He said it has to be in tape because in Poland, no one has money to buy CDs or vinyl, and no one has CD players!!... Did you ever wonder?!... Another example: three guys who live in a state near Sao Paulo

wanted to start a band with veganism as focus. They feel they had to be more active for veganism but they had no money, no equipment, nothing at all. What did they do? They started a rap/hip hop band where everyone sings and no "big" investment is required. So that's what we had in mind when we said we are part of the Third World Hardcore. It means to do the best you can with the [few] resources you have.

Above all, I think TWH means that if you're not dedicated, you're out, and I will tell you why. Firstly, hardcore activities demand money. Usually, as far as I know the US and European scenes, what people do is investing their time and efforts on their bands, zines or labels, and this will provide them with some money back, so they can keep on carrying out these activities. TWH is not like that. Here, starting a band or a zine means you're going to lose lots of money, with no chance of getting it back. We do it because we love it. It is part of our lives. We are able to carry out hardcore activities only because most of us work and pay for the costs. Consider the following: I play guitar in a band, so I pay for strings, any repair that sometimes is required, transportation, rehearsals, recordings, trips to play outside our state... everything. What do I get back? Nothing at all. I can count on one hand how many times I left the show with \$20 dollars in my pocket. Almost no one here has money to buy equipment. I play guitar for six years and I never had amplifiers to play in my home. We pay for rehearsals in studios. It is really expensive (about \$12 each hour of practice) but to buy equipment is almost impossible. One Marshall JCM 900 is about \$2.000. Few people can afford it so we rent equipment in the shows and almost all the money raised goes to pay for it. For people who makes zines the problem is the same. We Brazilians, as any other poor/underdeveloped country, have no tradition of reading. Also because of the language barrier that doesn't allow non-Portuguese speakers from another countries to read it, zines sell few copies, usually around 300 to 400 copies when it is pretty well done. Starting labels is an adventure. You

have to work hard on it, and be pleased if you can manage to get some money back to pay for your next releases.

So the point of identifying ourselves with Third World Hardcore has two different reasons: first of all, for the kids of Third World countries, we try to create a bond among us, in a way that they feel motivated to carry on; that they feel we are not lesser than American and European scenes and we should not idolize them; that we have to assess our scenes taking our situation in consideration; and that we always should try to help smaller scenes of "far-off countries" (using an eurocentric terminology). On the other hand, for the kids of First World countries, we want them to know that there's something more besides the four walls that they've built around their countries; that there are true, dedicated hardcore kids, with lots of things to say, trying to build up a scene in their places; and finally that it is extremely interesting to hear from a person who lives in a completely different reality/culture cos we can learn a lot with that.

Ultimately the TWH thing was a kind of protest. We see stupid American "hardcore" bands selling 40.000 copies of one cd while we strive to sell 1.000 (in the best cases cos many bands don't even have money to put out a cd). That's outrageous because we know that many bands in Third World countries have quality and many important things to say, and very, very few people in First World pays attention to it. We think hardcore was supposed to be a worldwide movement of communication, enjoyment, exchange of information and so on. And we find that for most of the kids, it is just another way of putting the US on a pedestal and idolizing it. It is so fucking upsetting to see the very same structures of imperialism in which capitalism is based on fitting for hardcore scene too. The sacrosanct Stars and Stripes above all, then the "Illuminated" Europe (G7 and so on), then the scum of Europe (Portugal, Eastern Europe and so on), then the scum of the world (us...and so on). Well, I don't like to play the victim... Up to now, we're doing well by ourselves. But the point is: I be-

lieve that there are many concerned kids that maybe never thought about it and perhaps would like this situation to change. Should our scene be driven this way? Don't you think we could be learning from each other instead?

What do you think hardcore kids from the United States and Western Europe can learn from third world hardcore bands and kids?

Tarcisio: I think the best thing about keeping contact with Third World kids is that you will be able to learn a lot with so many different cultures and different realities, thus being able to understand better our world and ultimately ourselves [and for those who care, to come up with more reasonable criticisms and solutions for the order under which we're living].

Over the past five centuries, the cultural, political, and economic forces of the West have attained an incredible power and influence throughout the world. Not only have Western capitalism and state power come to dominate the lives of the citizens of Western nations, but, through corporate expansion and political intervention, the rest of the world has also been brought under the control of these powers. Hardcore punk is a rejection of this system that started from within the ranks of these Western nations. Why do you think people in the third world have also become involved in hardcore? What do you think draws them to it, rather than to other revolutionary movements?

Do you think that it makes sense for people outside of the West to reject Western cultural domination by associating themselves with Western countercultures like hardcore punk? Could it be that this is just a subtler form of Western imperialism, that those who feel oppressed by the dominating forces of Western culture turn to Western countercultures in their fight against the obliteration of their own cultures? Or is there something that hardcore has to offer that no other revolutionary movement could, that is relevant across all cultural lines?

Tarcisio: There are some different kinds of kids who get involved with hardcore and their personal motivations vary. First, there are the poor kids, the ones who live in favelas or in very poor neighborhoods which are far-off downtown (we call it periphery). I would say that most part of these kids get involved with hardcore as a way of escaping from a hard reality they face in their places. Almost all of them have a real shitty education and therefore are not prone to think about important political aggressive music and use it as a way of releasing their accumulated anger. A few kids that also come from these poor places are different. They are educated, not because they go to school, but because they are autodidactic or cos they were born in a more cultural environment; they also feel themselves identified with the aggressive, powerful music; but they main thing is that they see in hardcore a way of 'salvation' (the word, with religious connotations, is not really good but accurate after all). I have some friends like these: they started attending hardcore shows and finally got involved with vegan straight-edge not because it is cool, or because they wanted to fit in with some group. This was the only 'salvation' for people like them, who live in the middle of a favela ruled by drug traffic, seeing in their everyday lives so many deaths, police harassment, young kids phisically dependent on coca or crack at 12, 14 years old and so on. These kids are very interested in politics for obvious reason. Then there are those who are not poor but not rich either, like myself. (But I think the rich kids also fit in this category). Here we have two different kinds: the first one, the typical rebel-with-no-reason-why-kid. Stupid teens that are only in it for the music-sorry for the cliché. They just like to follow American standards; only attend to gringo-mainstream-pseudo-hardcore shows; don't even know local bands and zines and labels; and don't give a shit for political issues or anything which may demand thinking. And finally you have people like myself, and most of my friends. We got involved with hardcore-punk cos we were pissed off with this society and its sys-

tem. We started taking part in hardcore as a way of releasing our anger and frustration and at the same time, trying to get involved in a community of non-passive individuals, that aim to fight for a better world.

Frederico: What makes people in Third World to get involved with hardcore is, at first, the cultural domination. People around here consume all the scum of American and European cultural production, and this process end up opening the doors also for counter-culture movements of First World nations. Cultural domination is extremely noxious for the people of T.W. countries but it is so for the people of F.W. nations too, because the effects of its fundamental purpose (to pasteurize and uniformize) is something bad both for Brazil and the US. In the T.W., the cultural domination ends up creating means of fighting against it.

Tarcisio: It does make sense to reject Western cultural domination by associating with hardcore. Cultural domination takes place through the indoctrination of population by movies, magazines, music, big corporations, and so on. In the case of Brazil this domination means, for instance, an attempt to replace our rice and beans by Mcburgers and fast food or games like soccer by video-games and TV. Hardcore, then, does provide a good environment to question all this cultural imposition, and to start thinking and seeing with skeptical eyes American movies (with heavy ideological overtones), fashion magazines (dictating beauty, our way of dress), and the whole American way of life that big corporations tries to establish within Brazilian society. So, yes, it may be that we rely on Western counter-cultures like hardcore to fight against the obliteration of our own culture! But we cannot rely only on that! There are some good manifestations of authentic Brazilian culture that may and should be supported in order to avoid American domination.

Frederico and Tarcisio: In the musical scenario the situation differs. Brazil, like the US, has a big national industry of mu-

sic. We rather export than import music. Though in many other areas of cultural life (dressing, eating, enjoyment and so on), the American way of life did succeed in overthrowing Brazilian culture, in the musical aspect it is quite different. Rock, jazz or blues are nothing here compared with Afro-Brazilian music styles like Pagode, Samba, Axe Music, etc which are really the mainstream of music industry here. I don't mean, however, that this music production, genuinely Brazilian, is good at all only because it doesn't submit to American cultural imperialism. Most part of the groups of Pagode, Axe Music, etc. are utterly stupid, hollow, singing nothing but edible you-betrayed-me-but-have-you-baby-pop-shit and their role has been the same of pop-American bands in the US: creating apathetic and conformist people. Hardcore, thus, can be an alternative for commercial American music as well as for Brazilian. There are some few mainstream groups like Chico Science e Nao Zumbi, that really came up with a intelligent approach to Brazilian culture, raising important topics in their lyrics, using the language of our local population, and mixing many different music influences with afro-Brazilian rhythms.

Frederico: Hardcore does have some features that no other movement can offer: a music which is so powerful, full of energy, and mainly so aggressive, which makes it extremely exciting; a room for discussions of a real wide range of subjects, from religion

to politics, from culture to economy and so on; the possibility of anyone, anywhere start a zine or a band, which makes it extremely democratic (in the real sense of this word), dismissing an "illuminated" minority of geniuses to produce culture; and also providing a worldwide net of communication that I've never seen in any other movement.

There is a long tradition of American hardcore bands touring Europe, making a lot of money off European kids to bring back to the USA, and spreading a lot of American trends through the European hardcore scene without showing any interest at all in European ideas or innovations-let alone in helping European bands to come to the United States. [At Inside Front we call this "hardcore imperialism," since these bands are really just following in the footsteps of a history of American corporations that have sucked money out of foreign markets and replaced local culture with standardized, McAmerican Coca-Culture.] When the Iron Curtain was lifted and American bands started going to Eastern Europe, there was an initial surge in the hardcore scene in places like the Czech Republic; but the endless stream of disinterested American hardcore bands coming to cash in took its toll, and hardcore kids there have become jaded and disillusioned.

Now, American hardcore bands are just starting to become interested in touring Latin America, even though no Latin American



hardcore bands (and still very, very few European bands) have been able to tour the United States. How can you bring American hardcore bands to your part of the world without something happening like what happened in the Czech Republic? Do you think this will be a good thing or a bad thing in the long run? And what can American bands who want to play in Latin America without contributing to a tradition of "hardcore imperialism" do to avoid this?

Frederico: Well, there are basically two kinds of American hardcore bands that usually come to play here. The first one belongs to what we know as "mainstream hardcore." Bands like Agnostic Front, Shelter, Madball, Sick of it All, when they come, it is in a major scheme. Usually the tour is set by organizers that have nothing to do with hardcore, and make a lot of money setting the show prices at US\$ 20,00 or more, and demanding US\$ 1.000,00 from bands that want to play with them. These American bands, in turn, have no interest at all to know either our scene or Brazilian reality, limiting themselves to sexual tourism or hanging out to eat exotic dishes when they're tired of doing nothing at the hotels. Their only interest is making money.

The second kind of band which come to play here belongs to what I could call "true hardcore". They are bands that refuse to take part in this major scheme I just described. Few American bands (like Los Crudos) and Europeans (like X-Acto from Portugal) have already ventured around here in this utterly DIY scheme. Bands from Argentina are always coming. It is almost impossible for these bands to make some money because our scene is not like European, so usually what they get is only some money to pay for their plane tickets. Even the "mainstream hardcore" bands cannot make lots of money cos most part of it goes to the organizers. Those who organize the DIY tours around here are people really involved with hardcore punk, and thus these bands always have much more contact with hardcore people here and they are able to live and know Brazilian reality. When bands come to Bra-

zil this way, they have almost all the shows set in the weekends and so they can hang out with the kids during the week. Also, those who organize this kind of shows here are not interested in major bands that have no concern about other scenes. American bands should put aside the long tradition of setting themselves apart from "outside" world, and should start paying attention to what has been done throughout the world, for they have a lot to learn.

To break this tradition of cultural domination, they should know and help hardcore scenes all around the world. After all, apart from the US, the world is not limited to Europe unless your main purpose is making money.

In the liner notes of the Self Conviction CD, you spoke highly of the EZLN and the MST. Please explain (for our readers who haven't been able to get this information) what these groups are trying to accomplish, and why you think this is important. From your vantage point in Brazil, do you think you have a different perspective on these events than we do in the United States?

Tarcisio: In January, 1994, the day in which NAFTA was established, an armed masked group entitled EZLN (Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional-Zapatista Army for National Liberation) took over many cities in the state of Chiapas, South of Mexico, and declared war on the national Mexican army. When the Mexican Army was sent to Chiapas, the EZLN moved to the Lacandona jungle to protect themselves. Many cities became autonomous municipal districts ruled by the EZLN (of course, with the agreement and support of the local population). The name Zapatistas come from Emiliano Zapata, a peasant of the beginning of the century that led the Mexican revolution in the South (along with Pancho Villa in the North), with the primary demand of land for the peasants to work and live with dignity. The Zapatistas are almost 100% indigenous. A minority of them is formed by mestizos (that's how they call the Mexican citizens who come from the urban cities). They started organizing

10 years before the uprising in January 1994. As they used to say, there was a "wall" between the jungle and the cities. So neglected was the state of Chiapas that this permitted the EZLN to grow so much without anyone realizing it. Chiapas was a state abandoned to death. Most chiapanecos are illeterate, they die from curable diseases, have real bad health service (for instance Chiapas has one doctor for each 1500 inhabitants), most people has no housing and so on. To sum up, Chiapas is a state of misery. These people raised in arms to demand democracy, justice and freedom. One could say that these is just what many political parties and governments have been trying to attain. WRONG! Any reasonable person knows that we cannot demand democracy, justice and freedom and at the same time defend a system like neoliberalism, based on authoritarianism, inequality and exploitation. The Zapatistas lift the banner of REAL democracy, REAL justice and REAL freedom for EVERYONE. This can only come through great changes in the economic and political system we live, and for this the zapatistas offer a set of revolutionary laws they've made, dealing with subjects that vary from woman rights to agrarian reform. There are some characteristics of this movement that draws our attention to it. They offer us a whole new perspective of struggle that never was seen before.

To understand this, I need to tell briefly how they were formed: Around 1984, (10 years before the first uprising) a small group of activists came to the jungles of Chiapas with an orthodox leftist concept in mind: they wanted to create a guerrilla group of vanguard, a group of mentally and physically strong few, to conquer the power and establish a dictatorship for the masses (essentially a Marxist-Leninist concept), just like what happened in other Latin American countries like Cuba and Nicaragua. Once they reached the jungle, they started a communication with the indigenous peoples of the region. There was a double learning process: the indigenous people learned Spanish, history of Mexico, reading and writing, etc. while the mestizos

learned to know the jungle, to carry heavy loads through great distances, to reduce their food intake to the minimum required, etc. At the same time, the EZLN needed a social base that could be attained only with the support of these local indigenous communities while the Indians needed military knowledge to defend themselves from the violent guardias blancas (armed guards hired by ranchers to protect their property). Many Indians started to participate in the EZLN, and it forced the organization and purposes of the Zapatista movement to change. The hierarchical structure of the Army was vertical, "as authoritarian and undemocratic as an Army can be," and the orders came from the top. The Indians had a different way of making decisions, which was rather horizontal, and in which the final decisions always came from the basis. I mean that no decision within the indigenous communities was made until an assembly (where all people had the right to express their opinions) took place and a consensus was reached. The increasing of indigenous people in the EZLN radically changed the concept of organization of the Zapatistas, until a moment when no decision could be made without the agreement of the people. Slowly, the purposes of the group were also changing until they become what they are today: a "post-modernist" revolution (as some observers have labeled them) for they don't fit in any concept we have of previous revolutions. Their main premise is kind of paradox, but a very reasonable one: ordering disobeying. So they always make it clear that they are an Army, not a guerrilla group, and that they want to end Power, not to take it. Actually, they do have a hierarchy (Above all, the Clandestine Revolutionary Indigenous Committee-CCRI, a group of delegates of various indigenous communities, then the EZLN (the army), with all its internal hierarchy). But 1. even the CCRI cannot make decisions without the consultation of the whole population. And 2. this hierarchy is fundamentally moral, the leaders have conquered the trust of the population, not their fear, so any time the communities feel their representatives are

not representing them anymore, they can easily removed them. This is the true, representative democracy - one which does not suffocate a minority because they reach a consensus, and which truly represents its people because no decision can be made without the community's consultation. Many people have been trying to label them and forcefully try to fit them into previous ideologies. Actually they are something new, they came up with new forms of organization, with new ideas of how our economic and political system should be driven. There was a clash between the theoretical (orthodox leftism) and the practical (indigenous way of living) and the result was the Zapatistas. Also many things have been said about their masks (association with terrorism...). Zapatistas stated that the masks were to avoid caudillismo (an individual becoming the supreme leader of a movement, usually in a guerrilla movement). After, it became a symbol of the Zapatistas. I remember once Subcommander Marcos saying that "if you want to know what lies behind the masks, take a mirror and you will see it". Knowing the importance of the political aspect of the struggle, the leaders of the Zapatistas were very, very smart. For the first time in history, a revolutionary movement established a communication with the civilian population (through internet!). As soon as the government started to threaten them with the Mexican Army forces, they went to the internet asking for the intervention of the civilian population. Thousands of people in several countries organized demonstrations in front of Mexican embassies, thus forcing the Mexican government to step back with the Army advancement. The war time-the military confrontation between EZLN and the Mexican Army was very brief (a few days). After that, a political war took place instead, in which the Zapatistas have conquered many advancements. Many Zapatista Solidarity Committees were founded in many countries, many meetings against Neoliberalism were organized by them, arousing several discussions all around the world about so-called Globalization and its consequences for the world.

The importance of the Zapatistas is obvious. First, we have a new possibility of change, expressed by their own forces and their fight in Mexico. Second, as Subcommander Marcos once said, Zapatistas are "professionals of hope" (in opposition to a declaration of the president of the republic of Mexico, regarding them as "professionals of violence").

The Zapatistas are the materialization of my hope and my dreams, and [I'm sure] of all the people that truly believe in an egalitarian, just, and free society. Their existence itself is a great, never-ending source of inspiration for ALL the discontented people around the world. Just like myself, I truly believe that many people get from the Zapatistas their strength to stand up and to fight! As Marcos said in one of his many communiqués: "Freedom is just like the morning, some people waits for it sleeping. Others wake up and walk the night in search of it. The Zapatistas are insomnia addicts that make history desperate." The Landless Workers Movement (MST) is a Brazilian movement for agrarian reform. In the last years, MST gained a great prominence among Brazilian society. Their actions provide subjects for headlines in the major newspapers almost everyday. In Brazil, unlike in the US, the problem of land is a real big issue. Land (like wealth) is really badly distributed. Brazil is a rich country (I mean we have plenty of natural resources) but concerning the distribution of wealth-including land-Brazil fill the bottom of the ONU rankings, side by side with very, very poor African countries. Here we have huge areas of fertile lands completely abandoned. The main thing is, the big land-owners don't want their land to be occupied by small peasants and farmers cos 1. they make a lot of money with speculations in the real estate market and 2. they don't want competition, even of smaller producers. So we have too much land in the hands of very few people. MST is an organized movement for agrarian reform and so they have all the structure to take these lands for the poor peasants. So, if you have a family and have no place to live, you look for them.

They will put you in a list (you have to wait the ones who came first). A MST commission look for fertile lands that are not being productive and then decide which families want to go there. They organize an invasion and take the land. That's when the problem starts, cos they will have to fight for the legalization of the occupation. The landowners will try to banish everyone from their lands so usually MST peasants will have to fight police attacks first and then the court. I forgot to mention that the act of the invasion, many times, does not happen peacefully. Landowners have their own personal guard to protect them from invasion and stealing of cattle and stuff like that. These guards welcome MST militants with gun fires, even knowing that poor peasants have nothing but scythes to fight. Killings, therefore, are common. If MST lose the battle in the court, the State send the police to banish the peasants and they have to look for another land. But the fact is that many times they manage to earn the land legally, because it is not being productive for many years and the law gives privilege to the people who use the land to produce (at least in theory it is that way). The battle in the court also takes some time, so the invaders will live in these lands for a minimum period (maybe one year-I can't be so precise about how long but it takes some time).

Meanwhile, MST provides all the means for the peasants to start living there. They provide several and different kinds of seeds along with teachings of how to start crops; they teach how to build their houses, notions of hygiene and how to build a good sewage system; everyone has a school classes with Paulo Freire method (Paulo Freire is a libertarian educator that created a whole new method of teaching, banishing authoritarian ways in schools, and using people's everyday life as source of their education-for instance, for a peasant who lives in a rural area, he would not teach a phrase like: "My car is blue" but rather "My spade is brown". This makes learning a lot easier and more enjoyable too, while avoiding desires of unattainable things [consumerism] among poor people); they forbid alcohol and drugs since alco-

holism is one of the main problems among poor communities; and they also promote cultural manifestations like theater, musical performances and many other kinds of art. As I already said, MST is really prominent today. They attained a great political power in Brazil. Agrarian reform, it could be said, is a reformist movement, a necessary but palliative solution, that does not actually solve the problem of capitalism. However, MST's approach to radicalization [in a revolutionary sense] is plain to see. Some months ago they started raids at supermarkets in the Northeast of the country, so things are getting harder everyday. All the leaders of MST are orthodox leftists, that ultimately aim to take power and all that stuff. I'm not sure whether it is good at all for the poor peasants, since they are many times being used for personal political promotion of many 'leftist' politicians. Anyway, I have hope MST's increasing of power may turn it into a more revolutionary organization in the next years, and I also hope that this revolutionary struggle be rather for self-determination of the poor population than just a staircase for leftist politicians to take the power and do the same shit as China.

Brazilians surely fill a privileged position to comprehend the MST and the EZLN for the simple reason that we are closer to these problems than you are. Agrarian Reform is not an issue at all in the US. We, as any other Third World country, still have a reasonable percentage of the population living in rural areas [in complete misery]; much of our rural work is done by peasants (men, women and kids) cos our agriculture is not mechanized like yours; there is a huge concentration of land and so on. So MST is very relevant for Brazilian reality but never for Americans our Europeans. EZLN is also easier for us to understand because we're much closer to misery, both in and outside indigenous communities. Although the US is geographically much closer to Mexico, we Brazilians are much more familiar with Mexican reality than you are. I feel most of the American population is completely alienated from what happens outside their boundaries. They are mostly indoctrinated

by a very strong individual-liberal-competitive-oriented ideology (strongly rooted in Protestantism) in which every affront against private property is taken as a serious crime and therefore they are not prone to understand such revolutionary struggles as we are.

What concrete things can "third world hardcore" bands and kids do to support revolutionary forces like these? And what can Americans (hardcore bands and others too) do to help support these groups?

Tarcisio: Both in Third World and in the US and Europe, our role is the same. Concerning the bands, the best (and perhaps only) thing we can do is try to inform other people within hardcore community about it. As individuals, however, all of us can do a lot. The Zapatistas rose up five years ago and they were not smashed because of public support and pressure. We, as individuals, can try to keep informed about what happens in the Zapatista communities and, whenever necessary, organizes demonstrations in front of Mexican Embassies (or, rather than organizing them, contacting the local Zapatista Solidarity Committee in your country and checking out their plans). People should realize that taking a machine gun and going to the jungle is not the only way of helping them. I remember once I read Subcommander Marcos saying that the war is won politically, not on military terms. In the case of MST I cannot think of any practical means by which you could help at all. But I believe that everyone who fights for the end of capitalism (like you do) and consequently the end of private property is ultimately helping not only the MST but all people in their fight for self-determination.

Do you expect more people in the American and European hardcore scenes to start paying more attention to "third world hardcore" bands in the future? Do you think it is more important for you to build ties to those hardcore scenes, or to other "third world hardcore" scenes in other parts of the world?

Tarcisio: Actually, I don't expect that much. I mean, I do believe more people who never heard of Third World scenes will start paying attention to it, but I think that most part of the kids (unfortunately) are more concerned with hardcore mainstream rather than smaller scenes. I think it is important to build ties with hardcore scenes from everywhere, it doesn't matter if they are from the third world or not. There are great people in the US, in Europe, in Asia, South America, everywhere. I would say, however, that making contacts with people from other Third World scenes is particularly important because we encourage each other to keep carrying out our activities despite the low feedback we get.

English.

Let's talk about the use of English as the "universal hardcore language." Bands from all over the world sing in English, so that people from other parts of the international community will be able to understand them. To some extent this makes sense. But in many countries, especially the ones outside of the Western elite, most members of the hardcore scene do not speak English well or even at all. It seems that the use of English by bands and 'zines in those scenes could make local members of those hardcore communities feel left out. What do you think about this? How can it be avoided?

Tarcisio: What you just said is certainly right and it also holds true for Brazilian reality. Here, most part of the kids do not speak English. So I'll tell you why we made this choice. In Brazil we have a popular proverb (I'm not able to translate it) saying that when we have to make a choice between two bad things, we have to choose the less bad. So, we know the harmful consequences of assuming English as a standard language (the cultural weight intrinsic to it, and how it slowly invades other "less powerful" cultures), but we have to balance things. Portuguese has almost no use outside Portuguese-speaking countries (which are already few).

Personally, I am not able to identify with a band which I don't understand a single word. Perhaps if Manliftingbanner from Holland sung in Dutch, or Nations on Fire from Belgium sung in Flemish, these bands would probably mean nothing at all in Brazil. And they were very important for me and my friends. We try to solve this problem by translating EVERYTHING we do into Portuguese for the kids in Brazil. We made a zine with all the translations of the lyrics

Tools

(a Point of No Return song about the MST)

This system must be overthrown -
It has chained our hands.
A fucking elite still rules the country - They own the land.
Greedy and corrupt bastards imposing fear in the fields.
Defenseless rural workers - Millions have already been killed.
Years of poverty. Our rights have been taken away.
Worthless politicians have ignored social decay.
Landlords' power and dominance are multiplied.

They've built the fences. Separation from our misery.
They've set the boundaries.
Prevention from equality.
Militias are formed to protect their possession.
Only militancy can end this form of oppression.

Clench your fists! A real war in the fields exists.
Clench your fists! A real war exists.

A march to strike down every single oligarchy.
An occupation to free the helpless from tyranny.
Organize, revolt, show them the tools of liberation.
Destroy the oppressive empire.
Agrarian Reform. Revolution.



and the comments into Portuguese and we hand it out with the CD every time someone buys it. Also, we always communicate with the audience at the shows, explaining to them what the songs stand for. This way, we can assure that everyone in Brazil understands what we are talking about, and at the same time, we are able to establish communication with people like you, something which otherwise would probably never happen if we used Portuguese.

It's important to remember that it's no coincidence that English is the "master language" of our day. It is the most common language because it is the language of the powers that rule the world. They would like nothing better than for everyone to trade their native languages for English, so they could rule all of us without having to learn anything from us at all - just as they want everyone to abandon their own cultures so they can sell us their culture substitutes (McDonalds, rock music, Western "individualism" and commodified fake rebellion, etc.) instead. That's what all this talk in business circles about the "Global Community" is about: turning the world into one huge market for Western products. Teaching everyone English and getting everyone interested in Western ideas and music are a part of this process, and this is going on through hardcore too, as we can see. Do you feel compromised using English in your band and your scene?

Tarcisio: Yeah, we do feel compromised in using English. Just as you feel compromised in selling/buying things but you have to do it. Unfortunately English became necessary for a more effective communication, so we regret its use but we believe the benefits surpass the negative effects. (I wish we are not mistaken) Also, we try to work as a virus, feeding off the cell, but ultimately destroying it. The rejection of American cultural domination is definitely part of our agenda too.

Is there alternative to everyone in hardcore only learning English? Shouldn't English-speakers have to learn the native languages of other

hardcore communities, too? That might be better for them as well as for everyone else. Many people I've met from the European and third world hardcore scenes tell me that they've learned English from listening to American hardcore bands; is there a chance that somehow one day Americans could learn foreign languages from listening to bands that sing in their native language?

Frederico: It would be great if English wasn't necessary for a good communication in the hardcore scene. I will give you an example of how it is possible to do it: In the early 80's there was a big hardcore-punk scene around here, with many bands and all of them (absolutely all) sung in Portuguese. Some bands were really famous around here and used to sell 100.000 copies. American hardcore also influenced these bands, but the punx around here listened mainly European punk bands, mainly bands from Finland (Tervet Kaadet, Ratus, Kaaos, and so on). Of course, no one here speaks Finnish and thus could not understand a single word. They just knew the general agenda of these bands. The most strange thing is that, in Finland, Brazilian punk bands were also very famous in the hardcore scene. So true it is that there was a band from Finland (Fora Macabra) that learned and started singing in Portuguese.

Tarcisio: This is true but certainly too far from our reality. Why should the CHOSEN people learn the language of the LESSER races? I do believe Americans would ONLY learn another language if it helps them to DOMINATE the people who speaks it. Now, learning a language is not an easy thing to do. It takes a long time to start to understand it and there are so many different languages around the world! Maybe there is a better (maybe not better, but at least more plausible) solution, one which a French band, a real nice band, called Mano Negra, does. Many kids in hardcore scene around here like their music (including myself). They sing in many differ-

ent languages. I remember I saw lyrics in English, Arabic, Spanish and French. I found it very interesting and I think this way they reject the cultural domination (through language imposal) by breaking language boundaries. You can ask anyone who knows another language to translate the lyrics to you and then you'll have to check your pronunciation, but you don't need to learn the whole language.

Conclusion.

Tell us about your present projects, your future plans, and what we should expect to see from the rest of the Latin American hardcore scene in the coming years.

Tarcisio: Well, the present project of Jefferson is taking care of his children. He also plans to... take care of his children... and in a far-off future maybe he will ...take care of his children... who knows what else? Alexandre was recently graduated in Jiu-jitsu (now he has blue stripes), he is striving to become a real Ninja (just like in the movies), so he will be able to kill Antonio Carlos Magalhes (*) (only for fun) with a poisoned arrow [and maybe remove his eyes to have a remembrance], and when the cops come, he will just... disappear in the middle of a red smoke cloud. Wagner faces a crucial moment of his life: he has to choose between finding a job or starving. I hope he makes up his mind fast or else the second option will no longer be an option... His future plan is to make lots of exercises because he thinks his arm is thin [but I think it's not]. Andre already teaches Tai-chi-chuan and this year he will graduate as a psychologist. I think, only among his friends in hardcore scene, he has enough patients for his whole career - our crew covers ex-murderers, active robbers, kids who suffer from severe ego-trip, compulsive lying and many other forms of psychopathologies. Juninho keep on studying Biology. He also trains a lot

(*) the Superman of our national politics, Supreme Landlord of Brazilian Northeast, Primary Distributor of Hungry and Misery and too many other qualifications I would not be able to mention...

violent dancing for the upcoming shows. We are all striving to make our shows around here more dangerous (in the worst case) and more bloody (in the best case).

I'll keep on studying Letters and probably become a teacher in the future. I have lots of plans passing through my mind of how I could help our society with my skills. I know that in MST, within the occupations, they need teachers, so maybe I could try one day. Anyway, I don't know if I'm able to leave my city, my friends, my family, so in the end, if I cannot leave this shitty place, I'll try to be good, useful within my community. I also intend to translate some important literature into Portuguese (mainly concerning animal liberation since we have almost nothing about it in Portuguese), but this will require much more studies.

Concerning hardcore everyone is doing something: Andre is starting a band which does not have a name yet. Alexandre also sings for Point of No Return, Reborn and a project called Inspire. Wagner sings for Rethink. Juninho plays for Rethink and PONR. Jeferson plays for PONR. And I play in the same bands as Alexandre. So as you see, the FLAME STILL BURNS around here. (sorry again about the cliché

- I was just looking for a pretext to tell you that I have it tattooed in my back.)

Thanx for all the [few] people who waste their time contacting the wild and unknown enigmatic lands of Brazil.

P.S: I'd like to make a brief comment about hardcore as a "revolutionary movement" as you mentioned in your question 8. I don't see hardcore/punk as a revolutionary movement. By this I mean that I don't see hardcore-punk as a force of change. It may be considered revolutionary in the sense that it rejects this society and it is open for a discussion of how this system should be replaced instead, but if by revolutionary you mean hardcore-punk is a force of change I disagree. Actually, I see hardcore as a staircase for the kids to start getting involved with real revolutionary struggles. Hardcore for me is a school. I found myself in front of so many different perspectives and ideas and opinions, that gave me the opportunity to think, rethink and decide what way to choose. It may be revolutionary for the individual but never for the society taken as a whole. What do you think about it?

Inside Front Party Line Response: Granted, there are significant differences between the hardcore community and the EZLN! But we at Inside Front do look at hardcore as a movement towards change, if only a small change. Hardcore is an example of the self-transformation of a community, in this particular case the punk rock community. When punk rock first started, it was actually largely dependent on and controlled by mainstream business (major labels, rock clubs, corporate distributors, etc.). But now, as a result of the ongoing d.i.y. revolution, there is a vast grassroots network of independent bands, labels, distributors, collectives that organize shows and political/artistic actions, etc. Thanks to the work of groups from Crass to Profane Existence, people in punk rock are able to interact and operate in completely different ways now than they did twenty years ago. If this same transformation took place on a larger scale throughout all aspects of our lives, that would be full-scale revolution. It's true that transforming music/entertainment is much easier and less threatening than attempting to alter something more fundamental like the work system... but it is something, and, as you said, we can learn from it how to take on greater objectives.

Contacts:

Self Conviction is over but we're still around with Point of No Return. It is almost the same band. If you want to share ideas or anything else, write to :
Liberation Records
C.P. 4193
CEP. 01061-970
Sao Paulo - SP
Brazil

You can contact some PONR members by internet:

Frederico - valovelho@hotmail.com
Marcos and Liberation - mslib@uol.com.br
Luciano - luciano2@regra.com.br

In the USA the Self Conviction and Point of No Return CDs are available from:
Catalyst Records
PO Box 30241
Indianapolis, IN 46230-0241



When we were in Finland over the summer, we saw an absolutely incredible punk band called *mlaut*. Of course we begged them to do a record for *Inside Front*. Here's a little introduction to the band, put together from a couple interviews...

Maximum Rock'n'Roll Interview (from their September 1998 issue)

interview by C. Nilsson

MRR: Tell us about your name, "Ümlaut."

Smedvig (vocalist): It's for all those English who don't use accents on their writing. Here in Finland we have a much richer and more developed language than places like America, and that shows in our accented letters and words. So "Ümlaut" is about pride in our language and unAmerican culture. Finland has a language that came from a different family than the rest of Europe, you know. It represents our own culture and our fight against American culture.

Baron E. (bassist): Even if the word "umlaut" isn't a Finnish word.

S: We want them to at least understand our refusal.

MRR: So, tell us why your songs are all so short, so fast.

S: It is part of our general ethic, the Ümlaut ethic. We play fast and short, we live fast and short. That's the way we do everything. That's why we drive motorcycles, to move fast, to go from one place to another, to never slow down, always with the wind in our hair. We have a rule that none of our songs can be more than thirty seconds long. That forces us to do a lot in a little time, to never waste time, to always come to the point fast. If we can do a whole song, a whole musical thought, in thirty or twenty or ten seconds, that's more excitement, more action and no time to be bored.

E: And if our songs are faster, are done faster, then that's more time left over for other things. Other bands want to play for an hour, we say play for ten minutes. Play a whole sixteen song set in ten minutes. If all bands did that, we could have six bands play in a two hour show. No bullshit, if you like a band or you don't, you know immediately, and if you don't, they don't waste your time. Get to the point. And when the show is over faster, then there's more time left over for other things, for other parts of life.

S: For riding motorcycles.

E: Play faster, live more. We strive always to do everything faster, to move faster, to get more life. Because, we know that we will not live too long!!

MRR: So tell us how did you get the vocal sounds on the demo tape.

S: That's actually a very good question! We wanted to experiment with the vocals. Ulf used to work as a motor and automobile mechanic, and at his shop they had the gas Freeon. He discovered one day (because we are always, always experimenting) that breathing in Freeon makes your voice really low. We already knew that breathing Helium makes your voice high, so on the recording, we took a lot of Freeon from Ulf's shop and some Helium balloons, and I breathed the Helium in from the balloons and Ulf breathed the Freeon for the low vocals. That's how we did those very high and very low vocals. A lot of people have asked us!

MRR: Do you still do that.

S: No, because they changed the containers the Freeon comes in. Now they are too big to take with us to shows. They are illegal to take in cars or on motorcycles anyway.

E: In case we get in a crash and everything freezes!

S: Freezes in Finland, I don't know. But also when Ulf would inhale the Freeon his head would hurt very much, and we played one show when he was knocked out after only two songs, which was really fast. And for me it's better to move around and swing the mikestand around, not always having to inhale from the balloon between words.

MRR: So, tell us what was the song "Intifada" on that demo is about.

E: That is about the struggle in Palestine against the forces of Western imperialism. Anywhere that people are oppressed and have their lands taken away, of course, that's shit.

MRR: Can you tell us more about the song itself.

S: It was an accident, really. We just made it out of a noise that was left over in between songs on the recording tape and a sample that we found on an old punk record, we had the cassette with us. But it's a good song, very short, maybe the best on the demo!

MRR: Has Ümlaut ever played over the border in what used to be the scary U.S.S.R.

E: Yes, we have played there. Just a couple times, small villages, you know.

MRR: What was it like.

E: The shows were good, though the people didn't understand us a lot, and we didn't understand them very much, sometimes.

S: Like at one show in a small village there, they paid us with ten sticks and a heavy black rock, and the chief gave us his daughter for the night!! We would play over there more, but I think some places you don't even get the sticks and all they have to offer you for the night is a goat.

MRR: Yes... so, weren't you in another band?

E: I was but I rather you not mention the name of it in the interview. We formed that band with the idea that every song would be made from riffs from Motorhead songs. At first it was great, and we could write a lot of songs, but soon we ran out of cool riffs. We had used up all the riffs from the cool Motorhead songs. Motorhead is still around, you know, and we kept waiting, hoping and hoping that they would start to write cool songs again. But they didn't, and so finally we had to break up, it was very sad, but we just couldn't write any more cool songs. I'm a little ashamed of that band now, I'm much more proud of this one, so please just mention me in this one.

MRR: Where do you all live. Is there some address where people can write to you.

S: We actually all live in squats or sometimes the youth centers here. We never stop moving, like I said, never slow down. We mostly stay in Helsinki or Turku, where all our friends are. But if people want to find us I guess they can write you and you give us the letters.

*Further Questioning by Inside Front (January 1999)
interviewed through the mail*

Inside Front: Why did you want to do a 6" record?

Smedvig: Because of the metric system, of course. And also since the demo that you are putting out is a full-length recording, there might not be room for it on a 5" record. I think our next release will be a double full length record, perhaps we will have it released as a one-sided 12"... although again an 11" would fit our measurement system better.

IE: Tell us how it happened that one of the songs on the 6" is in Spanish.

Burri (drummer/vocalist): Well, you know, the song is

about American cultural imperialism, which is an even bigger problem in Latin America than in Finland. And also the song title is from a 1980's political slogan about Central America... so it seemed it should be in Spanish. Also to show support for cultural diversity of all kinds (we do not hate American influence because it is not Finnish, instead we hate it because it stomps out culture diversity and we want to have all cultures intact for us all to learn from)... and I've been traveling in Mexico, and learned the language and seen what life is like, so it seemed right for me to sing it in Spanish.

IE: So why is most of your singing in English on this last recording, if as you said in the MRR interview you are so proud of your Finnish background?

S: Understand, we are not nationalists! As I said in the last question, do not hate American culture or language itself, we just want diversity so we hate the cultural imperialism of America everywhere (McDonalds in every Finnish city!). We use English right now to communicate with people in faraway places who do not speak Finnish, but you're right that next time we record songs we should probably use a wider variety of languages, not just including Finnish. But you know, I had this great idea I want to talk about: what if there was a punk rock language? I have thought a lot lately about how everyone learns English so there can be a common language, but how that puts the USA in that position of power where they don't have to learn from anyone else and everyone has to do what they do. What if instead of us all learning English, we all learned a language that none of us speak? That would be more fair. Perhaps we could pick an African language from a culture where there is no violence or hierarchy, so there would be no words in the language to go with the bullshit we've learned in our societies. That way the language could help shape us to interact better in punk. Also, think how exciting it would be for teenagers getting into punk, to be learning a whole language that their parents didn't understand! It would be like finding a new world, all the 'zines and songs in punk language, everyone speaking it at the shows. So I think we should do that. I'm trying to find the perfect language for us right now.

B: I had another great idea I wanted to share, since we're talking about good ideas, and this one is important for you because you do an American 'zine. When I was traveling North America I learned about these things called raccoons, that live in suburbs and cities without ever being noticed. They survive off the trash and in the unnoticed places, without ever getting caught. I think the squatter punks there could learn a lot from them, I think there should be an alliance formed between the squatters and the raccoons. The raccoons could teach the squatters so much about being stealthy, making use of trash, and living in hollow trees, and maybe in return the squatters could teach the raccoons how to use the internet.

IE: Tell us how you got the idea to do your Bad Brains cover.

S: Well, you know, we have always loved old Bad Brains, but their songs (even the early ones) are much too long for us to play, even as fast as we play everything. So we decided to just do a cover of part of the song-the best part, I think.

B: I hear that a tribute record to Ümlaut will be released, and Bad Brains' contribution will be that piece of their song, taken off their record, as a cover of our cover of their song.

IE: Tell us the story about the lyrics to your new song "F.C.," and talk about the subject of the song.

S: It is a funny story where the lyrics came from, actually. They were sent last year to the Inside Front address in the USA by a woman who had written them in support of the suspect accused of being the "Unabomber." She was inquiring if any bands wanted to use the lyrics she had written. Brian at Inside Front didn't know what to do with them, so he sent them to us. They were written for a folk song, originally, I think, but we took two lines from them and they worked great for our song. It's good when we don't even have to go to the trouble of writing lyrics for our songs and the world just provides them for us! The subject of the song is just the struggle of the individual to maintain dignity in the face of the fucking machine, when you fight against it and it strips it all away. Here is the piece of those lyrics that we used for our song, which will be on the Hayes Auto Service record next year:

"F.C."

surrounded by the cameras, tormented by the crowd now you're bound with chains and shackles, still you hold your head up proud.

IE: What is the punk scene like in Finland?

S: It has been good for a long, long time. From Terveet Kadet to today we have had good punk bands and an anarchist scene too. Today there are still some good kids involved.

B: I like Endstand, for example. Though I'm not sure if they know us very well.

IE: I've heard your next release will be with Hayes Auto Service. Can you tell us why you decided to have them put out your record?

S: Well, we couldn't find any record labels that wanted to put out a record for us, so we decided to go with an automobile repair shop in the U.S.A. Ulf had connections with them because he is a mechanic himself.

B: It would seem strange for us to work with an American 'zine and an American autoshop to release our music, but we know our music can only bring bad things anyway, so we'll bring them upon the Americans if we can! Also, it is important that we choose not to release our records with record labels (instead with a 'zine, and a garage) to fight against the capitalism in punk.

IE: Any more news of the band, or tours we can expect?

S: Probably not in your part of the world for a long time. First we want to tour places like Malaysia, the Philippines, Chile, New Zealand, Greece, Bulgaria, all the places where there is an active punk scene but no one interested from outside. We want to go there and learn what we can, and help! Anyone from those parts of the world, please get in touch.

To reach mlaut in their homeland, write to them care of C. Nilsson, Gravadersu 4n, se-222 23 Lund, Sweden.

To check on their upcoming double full-length release, contact Hayes Auto Service (c/o George), P.O. Box 594, Louisburg, NC 27549 USA

(Hayes Auto Service shirts are \$3 postpaid and come with optional oil stains)



REPORT: Chicago Summer, West-Side

Goddamn, it's hot. You wouldn't think it would be this hot, but with the lake-effect and all, today it's up around 100 F with 100% humidity. I'm drenched already and I've just gotten up. Last night I did the old swamp-cooler trick: soaked a sheet in freezing cold water and wrapped myself in it to stave off the heat and humidity and get some sleep. Went to sleep wet as a fish, woke up comfortable and dry. Now that I'm up and moving, I'm soaked again. Open the back door to see Kaleb workin on his bike on the backporch. Antonio's pumpin R&B from upstairs, while across the alley, I can see Armando and Ruel workin on Ruel's hotrod. Three houses down, across the alley, I see the Man With One Arm come out his backdoor with his huge doberman. He stands around as the dog runs in circles around his yard.

Feeling Outside

I can tell Kaleb is still upset from the other day. He's twelve and he and his older brother Little Rick accidentally stepped on their tiny rottweiler puppy while playing football on the concrete between the apartment and the garage. It was killed instantly. I try to help him out with his bike to cheer him up a bit but the back rim is permanently bent, rubbing on the brakes every rotation of the tire. I tell him he needs a new back rim and he sighs because we both know his family can't afford it. I've become friends with his family. Kaleb's father big Rick and I sometimes sit on the backporch and pick through some old Motown tunes on our guitars while his wife Toni sings. She has such a beautiful voice. More often than not, Rick's not around and they are fighting. They are being evicted because they can't pay the rent. But it's such a slow process in Chicago that I know they'll be around for a little while. Big Rick is right-on. We talk for hours every time we end up running into each other. He builds computer hard-drives out of dumpstered parts but he can never seem to hold down a job. He doesn't say why and I don't ask. At least once a week someone from their family is knockin on the backdoor and I always answer even if it is 7 o'clock in the fucken morning—askin to borrow a dollar, tradin tools to work on stuff, askin me to play ball, lookin for some flour, or sugar. . . you know, neighbor shit. Like I remember from growing up in a neighborhood in a small town, like I never felt when I lived in white areas where I didn't know any of my neighbors. I get the feeling Rick and his family are outsiders like we are. One of the few black families in a predominantly Hispanic community (all the blacks I've seen seem to live in our apartment building), they probably have the same kinds of language/culture shock that I do when I'm at the grocery-store, the gas-station, the movies, or anywhere else—neither they nor I speak Spanish. I understand it a bit, even come to dream in Spanish sometimes cuz with the weather like it is, all the windows are open. Everyone knows everybody's business cuz no-one can afford an air-conditioner. And all I hear out my window is Spanish. Yeah, Big Rick and his family are like me. .

. kinda. I'm a white kid, living with other white kids in this apartment. You know, the "low-rent" white kid crowd. I ride my bike East to go to school, Big Rick's kids ride Chicago Transit Authority East to go to public school. My friends come over from the North, their friends come over from the Southside and further West. Me and my roommates don't belong here, but the rent is cheap and yeah, maybe we are the first gentrifiers. Except, I'm trying to get to know my community. If I don't share their race or culture, I do share their class position. This summer is the third year here for me and I know my neighbors, I know the streets, I know the gangs, and I know what's up over here. I don't belong. But really, I don't belong anywhere else.

The neighborhood

Situated north and west of the more gentrified parts of Chicago, the neighborhoods where Hispanic populations were pushed out by rising real estate prices and hip white kidz lookin for the next cool place to live, my neighborhood is overwhelmingly Mexican and Puerto Rican, with some Blacks, and a few Polish folks here and there. The neighborhood is mostly residential—apartments and two or three story houses. A gas-station here or there, a fruiteria, a carnerceria, a grocer, with scattered pawn-shops, junk stores, garages, bars, and stores that seem to only sell hubcaps. While most of the people I know are lower middle class to lower class, (you know the neighborhood is lower class if you see Mormon missionaries there—they tend to target the more disaffected and economically down-trodden), there are a few people around the neighborhood who either own property or talk about owning property one day. There are lots of kids and front porches and tiny churches in my neighborhood. Sunday is always crazy. But so is Cinco de Mayo, Mexican independence day, New Year's Eve, and whenever the

Scene

Bulls win the championship. Everyone shoots their guns off.

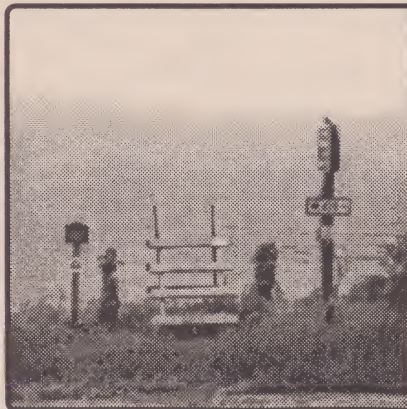
The alley and the animals

The alley is a big part of the neighborhood life. A lot of houses look out on the alley or have backporches on the alley, like ours. All the kidz come and go by the alley and I do as well, cuz I ride my bike. Riding the bike you can see everything. It's not like coming and going in a car. You see everything and meet everyone through this alley. That's how I met the gangbangers and the kidz I play ball with using a bottom-less milk-crate nailed to telephone pole in the alley. There are always people looking for cans in the garbage and once or twice a week, old broken down trucks full of tarnished furniture, appliances, and big hunks of crazy twisted steel slowly drive down the alley looking for stuff. One day I'm standing on my back porch trying to catch a

Manifesto for Inside Front #12 Scene Reports

The first place I remember seeing scene reports was, of course, Maximum Rock 'N' Roll. It was a pretty good idea, at the time, I guess, and probably helped to encourage international communication and awareness in the early years of the punk scene. But I think everyone pretty much agrees that scene reports are the most boring feature of any 'zine, now.

In my eyes, this is the result of the same self-referential narrowness that has plagued every other aspect of punk rock over the past decade and a half. The idea that a list of hardcore bands, labels, and venues could suffice as a description of everything going on in a given region that would be interesting to punks is absurd. Yet scene reports have come to focus more and more on nothing but these lists. I imagine two young hardcore



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little wind cuz the apartment is so sweltering. Looking across the alley, I notice three black kidz I don't recognize sitting in a car parked in someone's backyard across the alley. I sit and watch them for a minute, and they glance up and see me. Yeah, OK, trying to act all natural, foolin around with some of the knobs in the car and pretending to chat casually, sure I know that's not your car. I'm not sure what I should do. Big Rick told me that rival gangs had once thrown a molotov cocktail into the car of a guy a couple of doors down who called the cops on some kidz stealing a car. Fuck, I don't wanna call the cops cuz cops suck, but I don't wanna go down there. What if they've got a gun? Finally, I take the phone out on the backporch and pretend to call as I'm standing there watchin them. They split but I'm hoping against any backlash. Nothin ever happens. And my neighbors still have their car. I'm tellin ya, the alley is the action, at least twice or three times a week I hear gunshots from the alley—it's the action, not only for people in the summer, but for the animals as well. Walking through the little gangway to get to my apartment from the alley, I'm always assaulted by a swarm of bees and flies hovering around the garbage cans. My roommates freak out about it but I just figure its natural—you know, hot weather and garbage. Garbage is everywhere around here, again, not like any white neighborhoods I've lived in. I see kidz throw shit on the ground and while it makes me cringe, I feel like a dumb-ass white kid if I ever say anything about littering. It's a different thing around here. The alley is also home to a couple of families of stray cats, no doubt hunting all the rats I see around—the cats are quick and usually stay out of sight but often, when the night is clear and the moon is out, I ride

My Neighbors

Big Rick and his family—his wife Toni, and his kids Little Rick, Teisha, and Kaleb—live next door in our building. Toni's cousins live upstairs on the one side while Maria, a single mom with two teenage kids, Antonio and Anna, live on the other side. One night Maria and I were comin in, at the same time when a couple of cops roll up on us and start hasslin us about drugs in the neighborhood. I know the house they are looking for is across the street but of course, I'm not sayin anything. They're all up in our faces asking what she is doing there and saying to me, what's a white kid doin in a neighborhood like this. We're like, "we fucken live upstairs. . ." Fucken pigs. On the ground floor, live a couple of rastas—Nolon and his sister, Jamael—you can always smell the kind in the hallway when they are home. Big Maria and abuela Juanita live next door with a revolving variety of brothers and uncles who are always comin and goin at all hours of the night. Big Maria is always havin me and my roommates do little chores for her like liftin stuff and her abuela always sits out on the frontporch in the summertime watchin the neighborhood kidz. Paul, a black guy who plays in a blues band and seems more middle class than most around the neighborhood, lives a few doors down. We always shoot

the shit and he's always tellin me to come out to one of his gigs—usually I'm workin. Of course, Armando and Ruel live off the alley a couple of houses down.

Armando has an ex-wife and kidz that I see around sometimes. They're always throwin BBQ's off their backporch, pumpin salsa music until all hours—sometimes I sleep with the ear-plugs in. I remember one night early in the summer when I woke up to screams and looked out my window to see flames shooting out their windows and off their roof. Apparently, they had left hot coals burning in the kitchen when they went to bed and the whole house went up. As for the rest of my neighbors, I know almost

everyone's face and wave hello when I see them, but it's the kidz in the neighborhood that I know the most.

The Kidz and the Gangs.

You really live in a neighborhood when you know the kidz and the old people. And it was the kidz that I met first. Little Rick and Antelino used to always hang around the backporch and we'd kinda talk to them. Then they started pounding on the door wantin to hang out. Then Antelino is sleepin on our floor when his Moms kicks him out of the house. Then he's in juvy, then jail. All in the three years we lived there. Don't see Antelino much anymore cuz in between stints in jail, he's livin with his

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up real silent-like

and surprise twenty or so cats of all sizes pawing through the garbages. I think someone is feeding them cuz sometimes I see little empty tins of cat-food side by side next to the garbage. Everyone likes to walk their dogs through the alley—and here, dogs mean something different than every white place I've ever lived. Here they are macho, status symbols—everyone's got the shepard, the doberman, the pit-bull, the rotti—and they walk them around with big chains and weights on their shoulders to build up their muscles. It's nice to know people around, people walkin their dogs, cuz I never want to run across one of these dogs, all snarlin, growlin, and foam in the mouth, with someone that I don't know.

kids talking about places they want to visit: they flip through the scene reports in an issue of MRR and decide that the coolest place they could possibly go is New Jersey. Fuck Nepal, Portugal, Montana, Guatemala—those places barely have three hardcore labels between them. New Jersey has ninety bands, twenty distributors, eighteen labels, fifteen 'zines, five punk record stores, and three clubs that put on shows to recommend it. That's where the action is.

Seriously, as young people seeking adventure and knowledge, most of us stand to gain a lot more from hitchhiking around Alaska or Mexico than we do from writing to order a demo from a band in California. Not that it's not important for us to keep up with each other's projects, musical and otherwise; but it's equally important that we not lose sight of the rest of the world and all it has to offer. We should come together in punk not just to talk about punk itself but to talk about everything else, too—otherwise punk is bound to get boring as fuck.

uncle on the West side. We first met them when they were fourteen and fifteen. They used to bring over their younger friends, and through them, we got to know the gangbangers in the neighborhood—Pookie, Boo-Man, Roberto, Dog, Alex, and a bunch of other guyz who know my face though I don't know their name—all of them brothers or uncles or friends of these younger kidz we first met. That saved our bacon now, cuz knowin these guyz and having them know me, makes me feel a lot safer walkin around and livin here. We live two streets away from the dividing line between the Latin Kings and the Manic Latin Disciples, two sub-gangs inside the larger groups in Chicago known as "the folks" and "the people." We live in "people" territory. The second year we lived there, a gang war broke out. Forty kidz got killed in just three months that spring in ours and the surrounding neighborhoods. One day I was riding my bike up Milwaukee and I saw the aftermath of a drive-by—a car, riddled with bullet holes, up on the sidewalk. The ambulance was just leaving and the cops were all over the place interviewing people. Crazy. Another day last summer, I decide to take a different route than normal home walking up Talman instead of California, on the "folks" side of the line. A guy walks up to me that I don't know and have never seen b4, askin me to represent, to flash him a gang-sign. I know the different signs and I'm about to flash but I remember a couple of weeks ago Little Ricky gettin jumped by the Latin Kings and gettin a beatdown in front of the police station cuz he represented wrong thinkin they were "people." I remember his Father tellin me that everyone 'round here respects God. I tell the guy that I represent with Jesus. He eyeballs me for a minute and then asks why I got two ear-rings. I tell him, "Jesus takes everyone, black, white, latin, or ear-ringed." He shrugs, gives me one last look and moves away. Crazy, yeah? I try to keep an eye out on the changing graffiti to see where the lines move and change, I can never be sure of any of the streets except my own, especially now that things are heating up. A couple of days ago me and some kidz where playin ball in the schoolyard and one of the old-boys I don't know but have seen around, comes runnin up to a garbage can right next to the hoop. He overturns the can, pulls a gun-shaped brown-paper package out from under it, and runs off. A few minutes later we hear shots a couple of streets down. Yet this is the neighborhood. I guess I've come to know gangs differently since I've lived here. Not like you see on TV, but as groups of kidz livin in the neighborhood, protectin their turf and protectin the people who live there. I saw some of the guyz bum rush this guy in a car cuz he was drivin the wrong way down our one-way street. I thought he was a rival but they were like, "No man, we just wanted to stop him b4 he hit any of these kidz drivin the wrong way." Many a day I see Pookie and Boo-man out on the corner, lookin after some kidz whose Mom is off at work. It's weird but I get the sense of family that a lot of romanticized gang movies portray. One day one of our friends, a tall kinda goofy lookin white kid, got robbed

at gunpoint right outside of our apartment as he was leaving to walk to the train. The way he described the kidz, I knew Pookie and Boo-man were there. I was pretty pissed so the next day I caught up to Boo-man, Roberto, Alex and Dog on the street corner and was like, "yeah, listen... my friend got robbed the other day, and I'm not sayin who did it but that shit ain't cool cuz we live here and we give y'all respect so you gotta give us the same..." They kinda shuffled around and said some stuff about not knowing who was "with" us and who was not, never admitting they did it. But the next day, his wallet was hanging on our front door with everything in it—not the downstairs door to the main apartment building but the inside door to our specific apartment. I felt like that was respect... Sure there are drugs in the neighborhood, violence and a lot of bad shit. That's part of the paradox of connecting with the kidz and the gang-bangers yet still wanting to have the respect of people like Paul, Big Maria and the all the neighborhood abuelas. This is just a part of everyday life there. Hangin out on the corner in the summer, sharing a joint or a few beers, someone keepin an eye out for 5-0, it was like living in a community for me. Maybe it sounds romanticized, but I felt like I really lived there. Not just slept and ate there. Especially when Roberto breaks out the big-wrench and turns on the fire-hydrant. That shit is so much fun. All the little kidz drag their abuelas out to play in the cool water shooting out of the hydrant. Everyone takes turns shooting out the water and even after the cops come and shut us down, the next day, we're back at it. Though one day again I feel caught between being a responsible adult member of the community and a kid playin on the corner in the hydrant. Paul comes out of his house, all pissed cuz he doesn't have any water pressure yellin at everyone. I try to calm him down cuz Boo-man and Dog are all flexing like they're gonna do somethin but this is the paradox

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of living here. Knowing the kidz and the gang-bangers but still wanting to have the respect of the regular folks that live here. Knowing most of the gang-bangers are these people's children, nephews, or uncles yet also feelin a tension between those people like Maria, who gets up at 5 AM to go to work all day, and Boo-man and Pookie who chill on the corner all day. I don't quite know where I am. Once again, the outsider I guess. But in the hot Chicago summer, sometimes you just try to live and get what pleasure you can from life, whatever tensions and inconsistencies that brings.

So it's time for us to revamp and revitalize the stale concept of the "scene report." With this issue of Inside Front, we decided to fuck with the tradition a bit, and try doing "scene reports" that captured what was exciting about places themselves, not just in relation to hardcore punk. Greg Bennick's columns about his travels in India in earlier issues of Inside Front are an example of what I think makes a great scene report: they offer information about a place most of us haven't been to yet, tell what it's like there and some of the adventures that are to be had, and relate all that to issues that we are thinking about in the hardcore community.

The scene reports here are all experiments, and different experiments, at that, tentative forays into the future to determine what scene reports must become if they are to remain useful at all in 'zines. Please write to us and let us know which of these works best, which direction you think we should go with this section... and, if you can, write an experimental scene report of your own and send it to us for our 13th issue. Thanks alot!

REPORT: THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL

by Alex DWGSHT

It had taken months of painstakingly meticulous effort and concentration to even get me to that day. The better part of half a year, planning and plotting, weighing one item against another, and doing my damndest to make effective decisions. I didn't know what the fuck I was doing or what I was getting myself into, which was the only certainty in any of this. Man, the headaches, the late nights, the fear — god, the fucking fear! I was so scared...

I had gone to bed really late the night before — way too late. I knew I needed my rest, the next day was gonna be huge. Nervousness to the point of restlessness was inevitable, though, and I understood the futility in trying to catch eight hours of sleep. And I had to sneak in as much time with my girl as possible it would be a long time before I would see her again; another weight added to my already overburdened shoulders.

I awoke at around eight with nothing to do but go through my usual routine of cigarettes and coffee as I had been fully packed and ready to split for over a week. My mom came by and wished me the best. Her eyes were as dry as can be, which I remember vividly, and was a little unusual for her. I took it as a gesture of confidence towards my undertaking and was pleased. After tying up some loose ends on her school work, my girl said she was ready when I was. After a deep breath, I said goodbye to my kitties and my home and hoisted my pack on my shoulders and got in the car.

My girl and some of her friends were, oddly enough, heading in relatively the same direction as myself — a brilliant stroke of luck! I wouldn't have the faintest idea how I would've otherwise gotten to such a remote wilderness area of northern Georgia.

time to ourselves while dropping me off. Another stroke of luck! Hugs all around and we got back in the car.

The final stretch. Fuck, the whole 20 miles was like a continuous airplane lift-off. My heart was in my stomach, my palms were sweaty, I was getting dizzy. At this point, what could I say to her? Words, in the most general sense, rang hollow — we both had an acute understanding of the situation. It could be up to six months before we saw one another again. I loved her and would miss her; she knew it, and felt the same way.

Amicalola Falls State Park; we entered and followed the single lane road for quite some time. It was getting dark by now which, coupled with the surrounding canopy of trees that wouldn't bare leaves for another month and a half, made me feel quite cold. We came across a visitor's center and I knew we were here — that this was it.

Although I had known that the visitors center at Amicalola was exactly where I was to go, once I got there I didn't quite believe it. Everything I had known about what I was about to do was discovered via books and magazines. This was the very first landmark — I sure saw it, I just couldn't digest it, internalize it. It seemed inconceivable to just be dropped off here. We had been driving through nowhere for several hours — into a much deeper anywhere, the kind of place nobody in their right mind gets dropped off at. But this was it. It.

I bit the bullet and opened the car door and stepped out. I knew there was some sort of primitive shelter in the area, but I couldn't spot it. I looked around a bit hoping to find where it was, but no luck. It was frustrating not to know where I would sleep that night — especially it being nearly dark. But this was the nature of the trip I had gotten myself into, voluntarily. I knew this wouldn't be the last time I'd be in a similar situation. So I chalked it up and turned my attention to her.

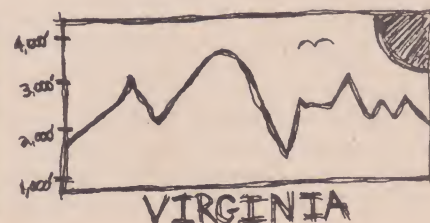
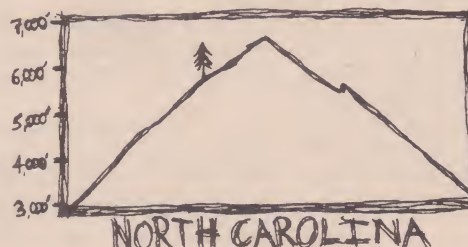
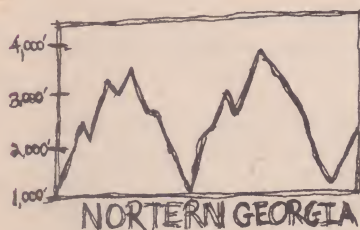
I looked at her and she looked at me. We started crying and hugged one another. The moment of separation. She's going to drive away as I walk into the unknown. Her face, covered with tears, is something I'll never forget. So bitter-sweet. She's happy that I'm doing something I want, but sad to see me go. That was exactly what I wanted to see in her face. We kept hugging for several minutes, soaking one another with tears all the while. There's some lame attempts at verbal consolation and encouragement exchanged, but, at this point, mere words hold no value. There are several more hugs, tears, and words when she tells me, sobbing, that she's going to go. One last hug and she's in the car. Our eyes never loose each other. I watch her back up and drive off. I stand in the parking space with my backpack on, leaning on my hiking poles. I'm exhausted after experiencing the most intense moment of my life. With tears still pouring down I beam a huge smile. I'm here, I'm really fucking here!



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I remember feeling so disconnected from the conversations happening in the car. Even when I was asked questions about my own state, whether I'm nervous or excited, things like that, I couldn't really connect — I was so focused internally that everything else seemed like background. I did try distracting myself by chain smoking, listening to some of my favorite music that I know I wouldn't hear again for quite some time (Catharsis' first EP, Dillinger Four's EP's, and London Calling. if you're interested to know), and holding on to my girl's hand for dear life.

All and all, it was a long drive, much longer than expected. After some 8 hours in the car, most of which along the mountainous, winding, and very scenic US 19, we arrived at a small town, Dahlonega, GA., some 20 miles away from where I was to be dropped off. We were all pretty beat. Actually, everybody seemed completely exhausted and frustrated — this was only supposed to be a five hour drive, but the road was tricky, even at a meager 30 mph. The others insisted on bumming around the town for a bit so me and my girl could steal some



Go ahead and give a kid a bit of freedom, they won't know what the fuck to do with it. Standing in the parking lot I think I expected some Park Ranger to jump out of the woods, grab me by the hand, and direct me to where I was to sleep. At the very least, I expected some sort of sign telling me where this shelter was. No such help, I was on my own. What I had was what I had. I was completely self-contained and could do as I pleased. There was no one to tell me what to do or show me where to go — for the first time in my life I was free.

I took another deep breath, composed myself, and started walking toward where I thought the shelter would be. It took some work to find, but I eventually got there, and found a couple other folks readying themselves for bed — it was about 10 o'clock. We exchanged pleasantries for a quick second when I realized how hungry I was. I hadn't eaten a bite all day, I had been too nervous. I clumsily took out my Wisperlite Stove and a pack of Ramen and after an embarrassingly long set up time, I got dinner underway. I quickly ate, cleaned up, and set up my bed. Just before sleeping I penned the following:

"4/23 10:35 PM. Man, I pinned myself to be the guy flailing in his own feces by now. I'm trying not to be overconfident, but I really feel alright. A small bout with nausea, but feel good. Granted, I have yet to walk more than 50 yards. Man, it's hard to write — my hands are freezing. Excited about tomorrow's hike, but it should be very taxing...we'll see. A warm feeling thinking about me and Mya's goodbye — that's what's keeping me warm despite the chilly 35 degrees here. Geez, I actually took the plunge. Wow!"

The Appalachian Trail is a 2,159 mile wilderness footpath spanning from Springer Mountain in Georgia to Mount Katahdin in northern Maine. It passes through 13 States: Georgia, North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine. The Trail is visited by hundreds of thousands of people each year and is America's oldest and most famous hiking trail. Every year, several hundred people set out to hike the entire trail in one shot — or "thru-hike", as it is commonly known. A thru-hike usually takes between four and six months.

Even at this point, I'm still not entirely sure why I involved myself in an endeavor of such magnitude. I had backpacked a few times in the last couple years, but usually only for 3 or 4 day trips. It was also obvious that hiking wasn't something I was altogether that good at — actually, hopelessly incompetent was more like it. I was terribly out of shape: smoked more than a pack a day, never exercised, didn't eat very much, had perpetual headaches, and felt generally run down. My repertoire of outdoor skills consisted of being able to set up my tent and light my stove and not much else. But I could put one foot in front of the other and was somewhat certain that I could get in shape and learn what I needed to know once I got "out there."

In any event, there's a certain romantic value to prancing around the woods for an extended period of time. I longed for the quiet and solitude. To be able to eat and sleep and move and relax — all at my own pace and when I pleased. More than heading out on the Trail, though, I think I was most interested in breaking out of the monotony of my life at the time. Things had got to the point where, well, it was just a pretty lame existence. Working shit hours at a job I hated was wearing me down, night life was slim, my motivation was dwindling. I could continue at the same pace or make some sort of dramatic change in my life. So I decided to do the craziest thing I could think of, stir shit up a bit.

I worked, saved and planned for six months. I borrowed money from anyone who had some. I bought a whole slew of gear and close to six months worth of food and necessities. I divided up all my provisions into 17 different boxes to be sent to post offices along the way, at about 10 day intervals (it's nearly impossible to carry much more than 10 days worth of food along with other gear on your back — at roughly 2lbs per day, food gets really fucking heavy really fucking quickly). I pounded out an itinerary and informed all who cared to know roughly where I would be and when. Basically, I covered every base I could think of. Even though there was no guarantee I would make it all the way (I could get sick, break a leg, freak out on the first day of hiking and run home crying, etc.) I was determined not to let a lack of preparation stop me. I had done everything that could possibly be done — all that was left was to hike 2,200 miles.

Before I go further with this "scene report", of sorts, I'd like a few things to be understood. Despite the previous paragraphs, this essay is not a travelogue, a blow by blow account of my experiences on the AT. This intends to serve as a VERY loose source of certain practical information about particular areas along the southern half of the Trail. I repeat, a VERY loose source. You will not be able to copy this article, throw it in a backpack and get farther than a couple of miles. Moreover, the most valuable information herein if considering a similar undertaking with unquestionably be the list of books and other materials toward the end of this article. This text will simply highlight particular places I stumbled through along the way and will let it be known that such an endeavor is possible for anyone interested.

Also, the hostels, restaurants, businesses, and individuals listed are not to be misused or abused. Do not take

Scene

advantage of their generosity to long-distance hikers! Their voluntary support of the long distance hiking community is relied upon by thousands and only continues when it is not taken advantage of. More specifically, if you do mistreat or misuse such information I will track you down and kill you. Quite simple.

In the same breath, understand that the wilderness corridor the AT takes you through is one of but a handful of pretty places left in this country. Don't fuck it up with litter or other poor practices. Understand "No trace" camping. Pack out your trash. Better yet, pack out all trash. Don't try to burn left-over food or debris. Better still, don't even build campfires unless in an emergency. Don't travel with a huge amount of people. Don't shower or do dishes in a stream. Shit, don't even shower or do dishes at all. Lick your pot clean and deal with being dirty. Fuck soap! Dig a six inch hole for your shit — and make sure it's far, far, far away from the Trail or any water source. Pack out your toilet paper or don't use any at all. Remember, a little exercise and a strict vegetarian diet will virtually eliminate the need for it.

The Southern Half of the Appalachian Trail
Amicalola Falls State Park (Springer Mountain), Georgia to
Harpers Ferry, West Virginia

From the visitors center at Amicalola expect a long, lonely 40 mile, roughly 4 day walk to civilization. Georgia, while not known for its huge peaks, is difficult enough to challenge even veteran hikers. All up and down — you cannot buy a flat piece of property! Simply exhausting. Names like Blood Moun-

tain and Slaughter Gap do not help matters. To be sure, it's petrified look in late April and startling views certainly make it worth while, just be prepared to earn it. After a long climb up to Blood Mountain you'll jet down a steep slope and hit US 19, Neels Gap and the Walasi Yi Center.

The Walasi Yi Center is a familiar place for all AT hikers. A grocery, gear store, cheap hostel, shower, fully equipped with a staff far more experienced than any other I've seen make Walasi Yi a welcomed oasis. The first 4-5 days are always the toughest — you're still getting in shape, not used to the outdoors and fine-tuning your gear. The folks at Walasi helped me with all these. Custom fitting my backpack, helping me with a brace for my knee, caretaking my first food drop from home. Yeah, this place is essential. \$11 hostel; 9710 Gainesville Hwy. / Blairsville, GA. / 30512 — (706) 745 - 6095

Beyond the Walasi center is more of Georgia notorious ups and downs. A few days outta Neels Gap will take you to US 76; an 11 mile hitch (West) takes you into Hiawassi, GA., a good place for food supplies and a good nights sleep, if necessary. The workers at the Hiawassi Food Lion were sympathetic to my obvious lack of funds. I got 4 AA batteries, two packs of Newports, Pringles, a bag each of M & M's, peanuts, and raisons, a 2 liter of Coke, three boxed dinners, and some talc for my sore ass, all for just over \$7. Can't beat it! The town's also good for a haircut and some take out. The big, fancy Holiday Inn has successfully put a number of small time motels out of business with their \$25 room, free breakfast, swimming pool, hot tub, ride back to the Trail, free stove fuel, and other such amenities. Food drops will be held at the nearby post office (Hiawassi, GA. 30546)

Back on the Trail a quick 8 miles to the North Carolina - Georgia border. No, state borders don't

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quite matter much, especially in the woods, but there is a cool tree to mark the spot. Got a camera? Stand by the tree and look proud — just walked through your first state.

Entering North Carolina, and Nantahala National Forest, you'll find a sharp change in the layout of the mountains. Instead of real sharp ups and downs, the Carolina Mountains take you up slowly and gradually. Sounds easier, but these mountains are a good deal higher. From 3-4 thousand feet in Georgia to 5-6 thousand feet here. It seems that the forest is getting greener and, of course, the temperature warmer. A very peaceful and pleasant place to walk.

Less than a hundred miles from the Georgia state line you hit US 19 once again, this time at the Nantahala Outdoor Center. Like Walasi, you'll find a hostel, food stop, gear store, etc. Nantahala felt a bit less friendly, however. They rely far less on the business of long distance hikers and more so on their rafting trips along the Nantahala River. As a result, backpacking gear is too expensive, as is food. And the hostel is often full with rafters. NOC is, however, a good choice for a food drop, given it's on Trail location. (NOC / 13077 Hwy. 19W / Bryson City, NC. / 28713)

After deciding to pass on the amenities at NOC, it's a quick day and a half to Fontana Dam, NC., a small resort town at the foot of Great Smoky Mountain National Park. Heated hostel with kitchen, \$25 NICE hotel rooms, general store with enough for a long-term resupply, laundry, restaurant, etc. A great place to stop before the drastically more remote Smoky's. Packages held at Fontana Village, NC. 28733)

The GSMNP, technically considered a highlight of the Southern AT, is usually more of a disappointment. To be sure, it's really beautiful; great 360 degree views, lots of wildlife (bears!), lots of great hikes. But all in all, I think it's a tad overrated. For one, the shelters are disgusting, which would be fine if you weren't required to sleep in them per park regulations. To keep bears and other such creatures away at night, the shelters in the park are gated, three sided shelters which are filthy and over-used. I don't think I've ever slept in worse. Old clothes, garbage, HUGE rats, graffiti — certainly no resemblance to anyone's idea of a camping trip. On any given night, almost every shelter is filled to capacity with senseless people who only add to such filth with their poor backcountry habits. The Trail itself is undoubtedly more crowded than in other parts — usually, again, with cosmopolitan types, boy scouts, and frat boys with very little sense.

Happening upon the one road in the Parks 70 miles of the AT, Newfound Gap, be prepared for shock. If you started at Springer Mountain in Georgia you've been witness to nothing but woods and sleepy towns for over a month. Nestled between the Alpine Village of Gatlinburg, Tennessee and the unconscionably gaudy Cherokee, North Carolina, where the Trail meets Newfound Gap Road, is one of the largest tourist spots in the eastern US. Just as fast as can be, when

you set foot off the trail and onto the concrete platform, busloads of screaming junior high school students, old couples in Cadillacs with Florida plates, middle-aged geeks with a multitude of camera equipment and their drooling offspring all materialize into a loud, obnoxious pool of shit you'd just love to see destroyed. Then come the looks and the questions: How'd YOU get here (like it's an impossibility without a machine!)? Where'd you start? What does yer mother think? What do you do about food? Where are you going? Fucking endless! (As annoying as it is, most of these folks are good

for a hitch to Gatlinburg where the infamous Grand Prix Motel will give hikers a double at \$20! At the first light make a left, two blocks on the left. Be prepared, the proprietor is a crabby Eastern European fellow with a thick accent and curt tone. "WHAT, WHAT?! YOU WANT ROOM?! 20 BUX! NO, NOT NOW! GO TO ROOM! NOW! PAY LATER! HERE'S KEY! GO! GO!")

Exiting the park at Davenport Gap, it's a quick half mile to Mountain Momma's Kuntry Store. With all the hospitality of a NYC cop, the Thigpens will feed you only what they want you to eat, yell at you about cluttering up the joint with your pack, and generally assume that they're doing you a favor. And, I guess they are if you've been on foot for over a month and are looking for a hot meal. They also have a honeymoon suite (read: rusted trailer) for those with a strong stomach and \$8. They hold maildrops, but I'm not sure how reliable a spot it is (1981 Waterville Road / Newport, TN. / 37821)

A stay at Mountain Mommas is usually a rare thing for a through hiker who undoubtedly has other things on his mind: Southern Balds and Hot Springs, NC. While walking the border of Tennessee and North Carolina north of the Smokys you'll begin to see the second distinctive change in your surrounding. The presence of the balds are just so fucking cool. Enormous mountains, that take hours to climb, but lack any vegetation at all except grass. Great views! Some balds worthy of note: Max patch, Roan Mountain, Big Bald, Little Hump, and Big Hump.



50 miles north of Davenport Gap lies Hot Springs, NC, a sleepy town of no more than a few hundred, but with a ton to offer the long-distance hiker. The AT goes right through town, on Bridge Street (very strange: walking right off a mountain and into a town), home to all services. Elmers should be your first stop. An old house converted to a bread and breakfast by politically minded hippie types. \$12 will get you a great room in this television free house, equipped with a great library (found an old copy of *The Match!*, if that's any indication), a slew of musical instruments, and, best of all, some awesome vegetarian food (the first all vegetarian joint so far. 1 Walnut Street / Hot Spring, NC. / 28743 - (704) 622 - 7206). Negotiations can also be made to work off a meal and a place to stay. There's a number of other places to stay, but I'd recommend calling a head and staking your claim at Elmers. Hot Springs also offers a laundry, a good grocery, quick mart, gear store, and a number of cool cafes that would blow all pretentious imitations right off the map.

Fat and lazy, with a stomach full of Elmer's muffins and granola and a backpack full of provisions, it's a tough climb outta Hot Springs. Onward to Virginia. This section for me was a sort of slow down, kick back pace. I'd been making good time, putting in hard days, and was finally coming into my "Trail" body: getting stronger, getting used to the hardships, and generally enjoying myself more. The views of the aforementioned balds, the warmer weather, and pace of it all was great. It's not necessary to carry so much food as towns seem closer together. Sams Gap, Erwin, Tennessee, Nolichucky Gorge Campground, Iron Mountain Gap, Hampton, Tennessee — it seemed like good digs were everywhere. Being just a handful of days till Virginia, specifically Damascus, VA., was also encouraging, physiologically. Think about it: to be in Virginia being able to claim that you've hiked from Georgia is a pretty significant statement.

Damascus, VA., universally known to be the friendliest Trail town sits just a few miles north of the North Carolina border. It's a quaint little town somewhat similar to Hot Springs, but with more offerings. Of note, The Place, a \$2 a night hostel is just a block off the AT. The hostel is operated by the First United Methodist Church, which may conflict with Inside Front's atheist readership (as it did with me). I attached a note to my donation asking that my funds be used specifically for the hostel and not for the church. Of course, you'll do as you please. The Appalachian Inn, right down the block from The Place, is simply a fully equipped large home that can be rented, wholly, by small groups at a reasonable charge. The Appalachian Inn offers television, laundry facilities, clean beds, and a great atmosphere. There isn't a Laundromat in town, which is part of the appeal of the Inn (219 First Street - 540 - 475-3415). Damascus is also host to a great gear store, pizza place/bar, grocery, and most other services. (Maidrops sent to Damascus, VA. 24236)

Shortly after Damascus lies Grayson Highlands State Park and Mt. Rogers, the highest peak in Virginia. Whatever you do, wherever you go, do not miss this section. It's absolutely stunning! More like Wyoming than anything east of the Mississippi. Rock outcroppings, rhododendrons en mass, tons of fog, tremendous storms (if you're lucky!), and tons of places to play. The peaks are moderately high (5,000+ feet), but are often chilly, rocky and somewhat weird and creepy. There's some new shelters in the area, a nice change of pace as most nearby shelters were quite rough.

A quick streak of consecutive 20+ mile days brought me to Pearisburg, VA., a run down industrial town where night life revolves around the Burger King Parking lot. A ton of groceries and the fact that the AT passes right through, does make it a logical stop (Pearisburg, VA. 24134). And if

you are in the mood to walk (HA!) a few miles from the Trail you'll find the Holy Family Church Hostel. Again use your judgment as to whether you feel like supporting a church or not. Donations are appreciated. The setting is great: in a quiet neighborhood on a grassy hill, a huge green lawn with a gazebo. The hostel itself is an old barn fully converted to a hikers only hostel, equipped with a microwave, refrigerator, radio, and small library (mostly romance novels).

Covering over 500 miles, Virginia is known to cause hikers to fall into a slump. After burning through a few states (GA., NC., TN.) most hikers come to expect the gratification of knocking out another state every couple hundred miles. After a couple hundred miles in Virginia, just outta Pearisburg, I was hit hard by the physiological phenomena known exclusively to hikers as "The Virginia Blues." Fatigue, poor attitude, questioning the validity of long distance hiking, and more general crumminess, are all common symptoms. Storm through or take a break? A common question heard throughout the hiking community. In Troutville, VA., 100+ miles north of Pearisburg, after 2 months in the backcountry, I decided to take a well needed breather.

A week at home with my girl did wonders for my constitution. Good food, good company, lots of sleep, and so on. Going home did take a bit of adjusting: sleeping indoors, the constant noise of the city, air conditioning, music, bars, friends, et al. Although more or less pleasant, this transition was hugely unnerving to the point where my apartment no longer felt like my home and visiting my "old life" gave me a mild case of an out of body experience.

According to any calendar, it had merely been 2 and a half months, but any hiker will argue that such a small sliver of time feels like much longer. Something about traveling through the woods, all day, every day, the constant

Scene

bombardment of all your senses. Time moves slowly when you're walking 2 and a half miles and hour for 10 hours a day. There's virtually no distractions that help speed up a day; television, an assortment of books, lots of company, a steady job are all non-existent. When it rains all day, you're wet all day (and your clothes are henceforth wet for several days). If it's hot, you're overheated all day. The sounds of the woods never stop; you always have an acute understanding that you're in the middle of nowhere. Your backpack is always heavy, and it's always on your back. Nights move slow, and night life is slim. Long distance hiking is an all engrossing endeavor — you're constantly aware of the earth's slow rotation and how it effects your immediate environment. Of course this is not all negative, mostly quite the opposite, but the days get long and time moves slow.

With a full pack (and belly), I picked up the Trail 150 miles north of Troutville, in a small town called Linden, VA., in order to meet up with a cool kid I had been hiking with. It was a joyous reunion in Northern Virginia and I was ready to get going again. I would be about a weeks hike to Harpers Ferry, WV., a relatively large Trail town most known for John Brown's attempt at pillaging the State's armory to equip himself and others for the overthrow of the "Slave-State" (read your history — good stuff!).

This 60-80 mile stretch leads you up and down many small but difficult peaks, with many scenic rewards. Light rain and fog coupled with an elevation bouncing around 3,000 feet conjured up vivid memories of northern Georgia. About 4 days into the trek, I ran into the Bears Den Hostel,

a charming castle-like joint in the middle of nowhere. Great company, swell sleeping accommodations (a mattress!?! Wow!), a game room, and a good selection of junk food make the place indispensable. And a steal at \$12 a night (Bears Den Hostel - Route 1 - Box 288 - Bluemont, VA. 20135 - (540) 554-8708).

From the Hostel, a short few miles to route 7, find the Horseshoe Curve Bar and Grill (3 miles West) where beer, french fries and bar food are served en masse. A good pit stop and just a day from Harpers Ferry, 1,000 miles from Springer Mountain in Georgia.

It all came down in Harpers Ferry. A quick sleep over in town, me and my friend were back on the Trail. Just north of town the AT meets up with the C & O tow-path, a flat trail from Cumberland, MD. to Washington D.C. A hot day, identical to nearly every other July day in the mid-Atlantic, while walking along the AT/C & O, in the true spirit of personal freedom, me and my compatriot decided to make a right instead of a left, where the AT split off. We were determined to indulge our senses in Capital City and even more determined to get there on foot!

How liberating it was to throw our AT plans to the wind and do exactly what felt most exciting at that very moment. Save my first step on to the AT, my first step towards Washington was one of the most exciting times of my life.

After several days in Washington, me and my compatriot decided to part ways. He, back to the Appalachian Trail and me, in true "hair-up-my-ass" fashion, on a train to Jackson Hole, Wyoming to try my luck on some higher altitude, more rugged terrain...

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And here I sit, nervous as all get go, planning another such trip. This time, the northern half of the Appalachian Trail. I leave in a week, alone.

Thinking about taking the plunge? Read these books:

The Complete Walker by Colin Fletcher

Thousand Mile Summer by Colin Fletcher

The Appalachian Trail Data Book by the Appalachian Trail Conference

The Appalachian Trail Thru-Hikers Companion by The Appalachian Trail Long Distance Hikers Association

The Thru-Hikers Handbook by Dan Bruce

A Season on the Appalachian Trail by Lynn Setzer

Contact the Appalachian Trail Conference for other books and information:

ATC

Washington Street and Storer College Place

P.O. Box 807

Harpers Ferry, WV. 25425-0807

Alex's new 'zine, entitled "Backwoods Anarchist Hiker" or something like that (please forgive my horrendous memory, Alex) will be available through CrimethInc. starting in late 1999.

REPORT: NEW YORK

Revolution through Shoplifting: Surviving 5 fingers at a time...

by KOASEV

If you are one of those people like myself who refuses to work and makes his/her way through life by shoplifting, then read on. If you are one of those people who would like to quit their miserable jobs but don't know what to do to survive, then read on. Living in the NYC area, there are plenty of stores to provide you with the basic necessities and then some. The best place to start by far is New Jersey. CorpoRAPE chain stores are blowin' up everywhere and they can be your worst enemy while being your best friend at the same time. Keep in mind with shoplifting there are numerous factors that can affect your success...cameras, alarm sensors, security, undercover security, store layout, 2-way mirrors, etc. Just because stores have some or all of these things doesn't make them invincible but a little harder than others. Experience and practice, like anything else in life, can only help you.

Let's start with the basics first. There are stores like CVS, Rite Aid, etc. that can provide you with toothpaste, deodorant, shampoo, etc. Supermarkets provide the same thing along with material food sections and deli departments. Go to the deli department, order

some food (make sure it isn't too bulky), walk to a remote corner of the store, stuff it and leave—free lunch! If you are looking for vitamins GNC is the best bet. They are everywhere you look. They have all types of vitamins along with a decent line of cruelty-free shampoos, soaps, etc. There is also the Vitamin Shoppe which is a little harder due to the store's layout, and they usually have alarm sensors (look at the bottom of the vitamin bottle for a square sticker with a barcode on it—remove it quietly (it can make a lot of noise and alert workers to

what you are up to) if you can, then proceed to stuff it). If a store has alarm sensors and you are taking a product in a box, be sure to look on the outside of the box, then open the box and look thoroughly inside for an alarm sticker.

Next up is clothes. The best place is OLD NAVY. They have been blowin' up everywhere and they have decent looking clothing (if that matters to you) that is comfortable and easy to steal. Boxer shorts, socks, shirts, pants, etc. are all easily stuffable. Just remember to make sure that the particular Old Navy that you are in doesn't have alarm sensors. There are a number of stores in New Jersey (Rt. 9 south/Sayerville, for example) that don't which makes life easier. Another thing to be aware of in Old Navy is that the workers all wear headsets that enable them to have constant communication with each other, making it easier to monitor potential shoplifters.

If you are into reading a lot such as myself I would suggest that Barnes and Noble is the best bet to take books and magazines from. When taking books be sure that you scan through ALL of the pages to look for an alarm sticker.

As far as art supplies go, there are a number of spots to hit up. Pearl Paint, Michaels, Treasure Island and even Staples and OfficeMax carry all types of art supplies (pens, pencils, markers, acrylic paint, drawing paper, stencils, press on type, etc.). This stuff is usually extremely easy to steal except for Pearl which has gotten a little harder in recent years due to cameras and better security (undercover). Art supplies aren't true necessities but if you are a creative person then they are.

Staples and **OfficeMax** are good for phones, answering machines, computer software, printer paper, ink jet cartridges, stickers etc. Remember to look for alarm stickers in and out of the box if the store has alarm sensors. Some Staples have two different types of cameras: 1) The obvious black ball hanging from the ceiling 2) The not so obvious small white balls that hang from the ceiling and are harder to notice.

I could go on forever and write a book on the subject but I just wanted to give the readers of *Inside Front* a few tips on technique and where some of the best places to shop are. Depending on what area you live in or where you can get to, each store is set up differently in terms of whether or not they have alarm sensors and/or cameras, etc. Just go into the store and look around to get a feel for it. Then decide for yourself whether or not it's worth it. Take care and be aware...and please remember to never pay full price!!!

REPORT: LOUISBERG, NORTH CAROLINA

as told to us by Ernie, interviewed by *Inside Front*
Prologue!

When Ernie first joined our band as a roadie, he was always telling us all these crazy stories about the town he grew up in in rural North Carolina. They sounded so absurd to us, with our sheltered middle class backgrounds, that we thought he must be making them up. One day I sat down with a big sheet of paper, determined to chart a family tree of all Ernie's uncles and all their murder and mayhem, to see if the stories were consistent. They were... and since then, I've seen enough of Ernie's homeland to know that he's not exaggerating. For this issue of *Inside Front*, I broke out the chart I'd made and called Ernie up at his father's auto repair garage, to introduce you to the wild world of life in Louisberg.

Inside Front: So how long has your family lived in Louisberg?

Ernie: Both sides have been there all the way back to my great grandparents. I don't know, over a hundred years.

IF: Let's start back with your great grandfather... I have here on the family tree that he was knocked out of his shoes by electricity?

E: That was... there was some kind of yard animal—

IF: —yard animal?

E: —you know, they had chickens or whatever—in a tree, he was trying to get it out of the tree because a thunderstorm was coming, and lightning struck the tree. When you get struck by lightning it usually knocks you out of your shoes. The awesome thing was, he had boots on, laced up. He got knocked out of his boots and they were still tied up.

IF: Did that hurt his feet?

E: Oh yeah, what it is is lightning usually melts the bottom of your feet...

IF: And so who were his children, then?

E: That would be my father's grandfather, his mother's father.

IF: And what was he famous for?

E: Well, they were in the lumber business, mainly. He was a farmer, and then his sons went on to the lumber business and made shit loads of money, and they were pretty big time con artists, got pretty rich. One of them, Edward Philmore Hayes, he was a Korean vet, and a biker, like a really oldschool biker. He died in a motorcycle wreck not too long after he got back from the war. He died at the same age as my uncle Phil, who he was named after, had his motorcycle accident, actually. Phil would be my dad's brother... he had that wreck the same month, at the same age: they were both 24, they even looked a whole lot alike. And, that was the day Government Issue played the Fallout Shelter, did a matinee.

IF: So you went to the show the day your uncle was in a motorcycle wreck?

E: Yeah, I remember I got home from the show in the middle of the night and my parents were gone.

IF: Have we heard any other stories about uncle Phil?

E: Uncle Phil is just a belligerent crazy person. He's had ten D.U.I. tickets or more...

IF: Is he related to your uncle Mark, or..?

E: Yeah, they're brothers.

IF: And they were the ones that got in the fistfight that day..?

E: Yeah, well, a couple of times... they've got in fights with my dad, too. Like, when I was out of town—well, actually I was just pretending I was out of town, when I first moved into that apartment, I just told them I was going on tour so I wouldn't have to go to work—the second day I wasn't here, my fucking uncle attacked my dad!

IF: Why?

E: Well, he just decided he was fed up and he couldn't work here any more, and he charged my dad with a broomstick, and my dad broke the fucking broomstick over his head. When came back in to work I was like "where's the broom?"

IF: So what's the story with those uncles about you waking up with a girl and there are people fighting on your front lawn..?

E: Oh yeah, that was when my ex-girlfriend and I lived with Mark, in the back of his house, he had a modular home with two rooms in the back... it was pretty early in the day, we had the windows open, kind of laying around, and she looks out the window and my two uncles are fighting like hell in the front yard. They were in the truck when the fight started, with a guy sitting in between them, this little guy that was a kind of innocent victim, and I had to go out and break it up with a crowbar...

IF: Are they both related to your aunt Diane?

E: That's their sister. She's Hutch's mom, who's about to get out of rehab Saturday. She was married to this guy named Stewart who O.D'd and blood ran out of his ears, that was a historic

Scene

event in Louisberg, our first O.D.—that was in front of Jason's dad's house, and Jason's here right now, matter of fact. And then she married this other fucking weirdo that wore the same yellow shirt for three years, for the entire time I knew him... before that she was married to this big-time drug dealer that's in prison for life now, and seems like she was married some other time... oh hey, she dated this fucking weirdo one time, that stole a transfer truck at McDonalds and drove it with the back brakes locked, and drug the fucking back wheels like twenty miles—and when they arrested him, he stayed in jail for a couple days and then jumped out the window, the top window of the jail. He broke his leg, or his back, or something, and he crawled like two miles before the police caught him.

IF: So Diane has a penchant for finding those guys.

E: Oh yeah, definitely.

IF: What was the name of the guy who wore the same yellow shirt for ten years?

E: Dewey... Carpenter. It was got so dirty, you couldn't tell what color it was. It had this one big stain that stuck out more than the rest... Dewey's best friend Gene burnt to a crisp, you know. This was the weirdest night of my life, I was staying with Philip in this trailer park, and their next door neighbor was Gene—they were driving to Virginia to pick up something, and Gene was in this van that had a wreck, got crushed or whatever and burned up kind of like our van did, except he was in it. And that same night, the next door neighbor that was on the other side of Gene drank a bottle of rubbing alcohol and killed himself.

IF: The family tree here says something about you beating up

his son with a pool cue...

E: Yeah, I beat up Gene's son earlier that day...

IF: You beat up his son and then—

E: —yeah, his dad got killed! Yeah, he was a real asshole, though. He was bullying my little cousin, who was like the new kid in the neighborhood...

IF: OK, what about your uncle that killed your girlfriend's uncle?

E: His name would be Atlas Smith. I think they were both in the illegal liquor business, moonshine, that was pretty big business back then, it was the only way for people that were farmers or whatever to get ahead and not get screwed. I think there was a long-running disagreement there, and my uncle hit her uncle in the head with a piece of wood... See, Lane will argue with this, but I have the facts here. She thinks his daughter did it, just because his daughter killed his wife, who was still alive—that happened just a couple months ago.

IF: Was this a source of tension between you and Lane when you were going out?

E: Yeah, it would come up whenever we got in fights.

IF: So according to the family tree, Atlas was on your grandmother Lucille's side of the family...

E: Yeah, she was a deacon in the church. The folks in that generation were the ones in the lumber business, they would do this thing called "calling out numbers," when the guy came to pick up the lumber they'd lie about how much they were giving him. A friend of theirs actually went to prison for it. They were making up to an extra thousand dollars a day... none of my relatives got caught, so they ended up having their own lumber company. My uncle Joe was the one that would water-ski in his suit I told you about—he would come down to the lake with his suit on, on break from work, take off his shoes and put on the skis, the boat would skid around and land and he'd

racecar driver, alot, they got into Amway together...

IF: Let's talk about your mother's side of the family. Who's significant on her side?

E: Well, you've got two brothers who are twins, they're pretty much the dukes of hazard...

IF: What are their names?

E: Ronald and Donald.

IF: Are either of them the ones that tried to land the airplane in the playground?

E: Oh, naw, that was their uncle who did that... playground!?! It was a highway where they did that! This was Vernon, my mom's cousin on her dad's side. they were coming from an airshow, him and this guy Al Peebles... and something went wrong with the engine, so they were gonna land it on [highway] 85, because there was nowhere else to land it... it wasn't as developed as it is now, it was basically just woods and highway. As they were landing the wing clipped the, you know the ground wire that comes down from the top of the lightpole to the ground, at an angle to the ground... and when the wing hit that it swung the plane around into the other lane, into oncoming traffic. They hit a van, head on...

IF: Am I making this up, or did they go under water or something...

E: Yeah, it was near a bridge, the van, the plane and everything fell off the bridge into the water. Vernon, both those guys lived, but they were fucked up pretty bad—

IF: —and under water, too.

E: —they were really lucky they went into water, actually, because they were on fire. On those planes, it was a two seater, the gas tank is pretty much touching you in the ass, it's pressed up against your back. Generally if you crash in one of those things, you're gonna die... but they landed it fine, it was just clipping the wire that spun them around and they hit the van.

IF: What happened to the people in the van?

E: Oh, they died.

IF: Ok, so that wasn't Ronald and Donald in the plane...

E: No, no, Ronald got shot... Donald was in a really bad car wreck, too, he flipped the car eight times, and it was like the dukes of hazard car.

IF: How did he get in the car wreck?

E: Just driving like a maniac, coming back from the lake.

IF: And who shot Ronald?

E: (laughs) His nephew! That would be my first cousin. It was an accident, it was a high-powered rifle, I think a 30/30, if I'm not mistaken I think the charge is exactly the same as an M-16. He reached into the car to grab it and something hit the trigger, it shot through the car door and into my uncle's groin area.

IF: Any other stories about Ronald and Donald?

E: Nothing super crazy, they're just always, they're the car wrecking, fighting twins, you know?

IF: Are they on crack, too, like..?

E: Naw, these guys have their shit together... I just think they have a lot of personality, a genuine disrespect for law and order, which I've always pretty much looked up to these guys for, to be honest. They've always had their shit together, didn't fuck around with hard drugs or anything, unlike everybody else in Louisberg... they drink a little, but they don't drive around drunk like some people in my family or do really stupid shit, they just piss cops off and have a good time.

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go back to work not even wet. The same guy got bone cancer—my dad was talking about this today—my uncle Joe got bone cancer, before that he was a really bad drinker and he got throat cancer, they called the preacher and whole family, they thought he was gonna die and the next day he started getting better, walked out of the hospital later that week. They were having the whole last rites and everything, and he was just like "rrr, fuck you!"

IF: Did he go skiing?

E: Probably—and when he got bone cancer, he had to wear a neckbrace... I was twelve, working at the service station, and my uncle Joe would drive up and say "if I could just take this neck brace off and throw my head back, it would feel so good... but you know, if I did do that, my fucking head would fall off!" He stayed pretty spirited...

IF: Now, was his brother the guy that killed that other guy over the drug deal, or was that a different uncle?

E: That would have been his nephew, he and another guy... he turned State's Evidence on the other guy and didn't even go to prison or anything.

IF: So his father was Joe's brother?

E: Yeah, Robert. He was the same kind of person as Joe, big in the lumber business, big time alcoholic, but genuinely a nice guy. He shot somebody's window out, one day...

IF: Wait, my chart here says that he shot two people in the ass...

E: No, he shot one person in the ass, shot the other person's window out. He used to buddy around with Richard Petty, the



IF: So those are your mother's brothers... does she have any other interesting siblings?

E: Naw, they're all nice people, but nothing crazy... well, my aunt Emily, her first husband, he did two years in prison for arson, he was just really into burning shit down. He mostly was just burning down abandoned houses, but then he fucked around and burned down a house somebody lived in, and I think he did a couple years in prison while they were married. Then he got out, and I think he was driving a wrecker, and he was pulling... I think it was another wrecker, actually... and he got pinned, just caught in a pile-up wreck, and it just crushed him. I remember she showed me his class ring and his watch, and even that was mangled and squished up.

IF: So was that the same thing that happened to Dewey's friend Gene?

E: Yeah, pretty much. I had just met him that day, as they took off—

IF: You met him that day and beat up his son, then he got killed?

E: (laughs) Yeah, don't cross me, motherfucker! I even killed the fucking neighbor just for good measure, went over there and whispered "drink the alcohol, drink the koolaid" in his ear. I remember I met a really nice girl that day, too. Her name was Michelle Oakley and she was the same age as me.

IF: She wasn't the same girl you woke up with and realized you were related, was she?

E: Naw, we don't want to talk about that!

IF: How about your mother's father?

E: He was a real hard-ass, a really cool guy. Well, I say that, but—except for, he was a Klansman when he was young, that's not really cool at all! But he went to world war two, and kind of witnessed the destructive power of supremacy, you know, and turned over a new leaf when he came back. He had a little spat during the civil rights movement with a black civil rights leader here... the civil rights movement hit Louisburg pretty hard, because Louisburg wasn't quite as backwards as the other towns, this town's always had a liberal local government, even the people in town were pretty liberal... even though they weren't super aware, they kind of knew that what was going on was fucked up. My grandfather had a falling out with this Mr. Anderson, they fought for years and years, and then before my grandfather died, they became friends. Mr. Anderson's wife was my music teacher, in high school, and she was always really cool to me, and her and my mom ended up being good friends too. Around the same time, my grandfather and some of his brothers... back in the sixties, there was a traditional poker shack here where they opened up on Friday nights and served fried food and mixed drinks twenty four hours a day until Sunday night, and they had slot machines, too. This was some farmer who had fixed up a barn out in the middle of nowhere, a Mr. Brown that ran one in a little community between here and Raliegh called Broyle. It turns out that the guy who ran this place was the girl I was engaged to's grandpa. My grandpa used to go there, they'd drink and get in fights and stuff after the war. But there was this one guy that my grandpa particularly didn't like, they just never liked each other, and one night he'd been putting all this money in the slot machine all day, getting pissed off because he didn't win anything. And my grandpa came in, walked in the door, put a quarter in, and hit the jackpot. So the guy freaks out and pulls a knife on my grandpa and cut him from his temple on down to his lower cheek. Not a really bad cut, but the scar was there when he died. So my grandpa and his brothers fell on this guy and his friends, and they break the guy's arm and throw him out in the snow. The guy had to walk home with a broken arm and no jacket, pretty cool.

IF: The family tree here says that he shot at a truck driver...

E: Yeah, that was not too long before he died, one of the last things he did. Truck driver was just spinning in his yard in a

truck, and he came out and shot from way across the yard, in the night, like, right in the window beside the guy's head, then he shot two in the cab on the one side, and he hit them so close together they went in the same hole.

IF: How did you know that they did?

E: Well, see the cops showed up to investigate "so we got two exit holes, and just one hole here..." You'll notice it'll stretch a lot of the time, because you're not gonna ring it perfectly. The hole will look like an eight... you know, I taught Alexei how to do that, Alexei was a natural, he can make an eight!

IF: So should I try to get you to tell stories from your own life, or should we not get too close to that?

E: I don't know... I don't have anything as interesting as what my family's done...

IF: I think, like, the story with the purse is pretty funny, for example.

E: You know, that's worth telling. That'll sum things up for me. Me and this really good friend lived in a trailer park together... he was a little older, maybe a little more streetwise at the time, because I hadn't been out of the house that long. We got really broke, and we were hungry, wanted to go get something to eat, but we didn't have any money at all. And we were both pretty hefty guys, so we were pretty fucking hungry, you know? So Dan's like "look, just stay right here, I'm gonna go get some money!"—because we were hoping for a phone call, we'd been calling around to see if anyone was cooking out or something and wanted to feed us. He goes up to the school of dance, up the street at the end of our trailer park, just kicks it up there on foot I think. People were picking up their kids from dance class, and he sees this car running with the windows down and no one in it, so he grabs the purse out and takes it home. He pulls the purse out "hey, check this out!" and it's my aunt Diane's purse. And I'm like "aw, god damnit!"

IF: So this is your aunt Diane who was busted for cocaine or

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whatever...

E: Yeah, there's that too...! But there was like twelve bucks in it, so we went and got food!

IF: What did you do with the purse?

E: We threw it away! Naw, I'm just joking—we put it somewhere where it would be found, I think we went downtown and put it on the steps of the courthouse or something... you know in a small town somebody would totally have just picked it up and called her.

IF: Is that the same courthouse that somebody blew up on Halloween?

E: No, that was the health department "somebody" blew the doors off with a pipebomb and almost really went to jail for it...

IF: Why the health department?

E: Well, you know, it was just the only government building that was kind of secluded... well, we thought. I mean, they thought. It was the night Mudhoney played, we were gonna go see them but it cost too much and you had to have tickets, and this is when they were a good band, a long long long long time ago

IF: "Flat Out Fucked"...

E: Yeah, that era. Let's see, we stole a duffel bag out of an abandoned car one time, got caught for that too, it had a pistol in it...

IF: Wait, is this the one where you're fleeing from the cops and you throw the gun in the river?

E: Yeah, threw the pistol in the river... then the cops came to my work and abducted me...

IF: See, that's what I'm interested in about Louisburg and this

whole world that you've introduced me to, is the sort of culture of resistance, resistance to authority and even to boredom in general, that exists in these small towns. A lot of people in bigger cities and places that aren't rural, they're totally prejudiced against rural people, white working class people from the country...

E: ...yeah...

IF: But it's like, these are the people whose everyday lives are lived in conflict with the police and the bill collectors and the motherfuckers, at least when they're not crashing cars or fighting.

E: Yeah, and the people here don't realize it, don't think about it, and that's the bad thing about it. I'm not saying they should be totally "conscious" and every time they do something, do it for a cause, but... a lot of people here do really cool shit, and they don't do it because they think they're doing the right thing, they just do it naturally...

IF: They don't have an analysis...

E: Like my uncles—the police will always sit around at Hardees, they'll moonlight at Hardees as security guards while they're being paid by the town to be policemen. So my uncles, in return, will drive down to Hardees in their hot rods, and jump out, fucking shoot them the bird and spin out, and make the cops chase them around town, and get them fired from Hardees! But they didn't do that because "town funds were being misappropriated," they did it because they could get away with it, and really piss the cops off. They're forty, and they still do shit like that...

IF: It's my thinking that the middle class radical type kids, you know, the political college kids, could stand to learn a lot from people in the kind of community you're talking about here... you know, try to incorporate these different groups into something together...

E: Yeah, totally, because once those kids realize

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getting in trouble, when you get caught, isn't all that much of a big deal, they'll be able to do shit that they just can't right now. Especially if you have rich parents you can get away with a lot of shit, and you can make a really ugly, big mark on things, you know, if you've got good backing! I did a lot of highly illegal stuff, you know, and I've never even spent a whole night in jail. I mean, I've spent most of the night in jail a couple times, but it was minor stuff... most of the stuff I've done I never even got caught for, and we did some pretty rank shit.

IF: It just seems like hardcore kids, for example, might have a lot to gain from these people they call "rednecks" or whatever, just as much as from other dispossessed groups...

E: Well, these people, some of them might have some pretty crappy views on some stuff, you know, the obvious... but places like small towns aren't as bad as people think. Especially the people who come from farmers' families, they realize that they're being screwed by capitalism, especially now, with the farm subsidies and all that bullshit, being told how much they can grow... it's not just tobacco, it's everything, now. To grow pickles now you have to get a contract with the largest pickle producer, they have to give you permission just to grow cucumbers and sell them, you have to get permission from the Mt. Olive pickle company...

IF: The one that's involved in all that labor exploitation!

E: Yeah, that's the one.

IF: I just spent last week in the back country of West Virginia with my friend, visiting his parents. They had an independent dairy farm, but they got run out of business by the big corpora-

tions, so now they just live there and hang out with the cows, which are sort of getting wild again. I talked with his father for hours about this stuff and he was totally interested in the same things I am, community organizing, trying to fight the companies that want to move in and build freeways and fast food restaurant chains in their country, getting control back over what's going on in our lives. And he's more than twice my age...

E: Yeah, a lot of those people really know what's going on, at least as much as, like, college kids who are messing with these ideas while they're getting an education so they can go get a job working for the motherfuckers they're against!

IF: Speaking of all this stuff, the girl from the house across from us where they don't have a phone is here to borrow this one, so I've gotta let you go.

E: Ta ta!

REPORT: "The Little House," Biloxi, Mississippi

from a letter to Andrea, January 2, 1997

We're at a legendary trailer punk/trailer park in Biloxi, Mississippi... coincidentally, I just read about this place in Cometbus two days ago. We drove for what seemed hours on a bridge over the Gulf of Mexico, fog before and behind, Neurosis playing like we were traveling into the twilight zone. And we were: traveling to the punk house at the end of the world.

When we'd pulled off the highway and were wandering through the dirt road misty trailer parks in the woods, looking for the right trailer, where the show was to be, I turned and said to D—:

"We've entered the David Lynch movie." When we finally arrived it was as if we'd reached the Kurtz compound.

History... there was this kid, the oldest of five children, who lived in this trailer park isolated in the middle of the woods of Mississippi. Somehow, he got into punk rock... his parents had two trailers, and—

even more surprisingly—he managed to get bands to start coming and playing in the second one. Eventually that trailer became so beat (in the double-meaning sense, like in On the Road), so covered in graffiti, that it became useless for anything but shows: a crazy burnt out punkhouse trailer shell, next to the family's trailer. The funny thing is that this was the only place doing punk shows in this part of the U.S., so every band touring the nation had to play here in order to have a stop between Florida and Texas. Lost in the darkest, weirdest recesses of the deep South, it became a legend. The mother told me sometimes they had shows every other night, or every night.

One day, the punk rock son moved away. The other four siblings were girls, and the oldest of them took over booking the shows. She's seventeen now. [The mother told me that when she leaves, the youngest daughter—who is seven years old right now—has promised, very seriously, to take her place.] The trailer is a hilarious wreck. We played with a bunch of other bands, some of them pop punk bands we never would have crossed paths with otherwise. The little community this place has spawned consists mostly of post office kids (high school punks who hang out on downtown), but they have a really touching, innocent idealism under that confused adolescent rebel swagger. In addition to feeding us, the kids who came to the show donated one used marker, one stick of Trident gum, three Hershey's kisses, and ten dollars for all the bands to split up.



That was fine, for once, nobody minded at all. After we played, everyone ate a red beans and rice dish that the parents had cooked for us all. They were the nicest, most down to earth, friendly old people I've ever met, and they made enough beans and rice for an army, as happy as could be just to share.

Soon, I realized it: I am in heaven. This isolated locale, the one place all the shit in the world has not yet reached. Dozens of cats (with huge, intact claws and genitalia, very wild and thus dignified and friendly, patient with the little kids, loving to any stranger) run around everywhere, just being healthy cats, catching their own food, going in and out of the family's trailer at will. The children don't "know their place" as children, they interact with everyone just the same—in fact, that's the magic of it here, three different generations coexisting and interacting so perfectly and happily, in ways I *never* thought could be possible, coming as I do from the bourgeois American nightmare (the self-destructing thermo-nuclear family) where the different generations can only be a cramp and a menace to each other as each strives for dominance. Here, instantly, everyone respects everyone else, all kinds of little kids and cats and old people and punk rockers, metal kids, hardcore kids, high school kids, old peace punks who came with the other bands, everyone instantly trusted each other with everything, shared anything! A veritable oasis of *humanity*, in the grand sense of the term. As if those old "tribal" communities where everyone in every generation was close and supportive and pursued life *together* were not just a myth, but could even become real again! A place where the animals are wild animals and the people are wild, too, let each other be free, healthy, happy animals, reproducing and doing what comes naturally and not worrying about the consequences because their community is unconditionally there for them, a community all the more rich and magical because it changes every day as bands come and go but never loses its tight-knit humanity (now *that's* what punk should be)—the people live, love, get sick, get sick, die, do good and ill, are free, are human beings, are free to *be* human animals. Old people and young people, related, even, some of them, together, getting dirty, getting tooth decay, sure, yes, hell yes, but treating each other as equals, hordes of interrelated cats rolling everywhere chasing and fighting and playing, heaven manifested on earth.

Other places we've had to steal food, or starve. Here, at midnight, the father has a french toast-eating contest, for fun, every night, for all the bands and travelers who come through! The record is 27 pieces, there's a photo of the guy from Screw 32 on the wall, he made it to 20. We all started out and made it to 4 or 6 or 8 (7 or 8, me), the Ascension roadie ate 14 and threw up, D— wanted to break the record and get his photo on the wall ("so next time we play here a million kids will come see us!") and ate 22 pieces (more than one loaf of bread alone) before giving up (he's still recovering now, it's 3 am). I'd had no idea what this show would be like (D— arranged it by word of mouth, they don't have a phone here!), it's been the best and most memorable and life-affecting of the tour, when I thought it might just be disastrous. Christ, I almost want to move to this joyful outpost of community, out here beyond the pale of America, of Western civilization, lost in the Mississippi woods, the answer to my fondest dreams and most desperate prayers. I've walked into G.G. Marquez's world from One Hundred Years of Solitude.

P.S. Punk rock values are so infused into this place that when a little girl opened a door for a cat and it suddenly decided it didn't want to go out after all, she accused it of being a "rockstar"! The cats here, if they like you, bite you really hard—as would women raised here, I'm sure. You know, the kids here were playing with *Lincoln logs*, for god's sake, building little houses, drawing rivers on paper, being creative, for fun! *Ignoring* the

nintendo! How often do you see that? Of course the only people who used it were bands that had come in here from the outside world, bringing their poison with them...

I'm including the above fragment because it was one of the first times I'd ever really been in that kind of environment. It's a little incoherent and gushy in places, but it reflects the excitement of discovery I was feeling. And it really is exciting to think that there is a place anywhere in the United States where the generations aren't at each other's throats. Older and younger people have a lot to offer each other, but they have to realize this and leave hierarchical relations behind before they can get anything out of their interactions. Parents who think of their children as being "under their authority," who think of their interests and ideas as being less "mature," less valuable than their own, will never be able to benefit from the youth and freshness that their kids could bring them. For these parents to decide that their son's interest in punk rock was something they should support too, by freely feeding and housing up to twenty people a few nights a week (and these are not rich people we're talking about here, by any means), is truly revolutionary. And in return, rather than just being boring and old, seeing their old friends on the weekends or whatever, they get to be part of a young and vibrant community, to support and participate in adventures... I remember when I mentioned the Cometbus article, the mother told me she remembered everything from the night it described. These are people not afraid to do and be more than they are supposed to as "adults" in American society. That is how a community must work, to work at all: everyone who participates must be willing to let the others contribute to the content of their lives, at least as much as they expect to have a say in the lives of others. When parents expect their children to abide by the rules they set and live in the environ-

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ments they create, without being able to have any say back in how they live or how their parents live, they are creating an environment of coercion that inevitably results in quarrels, hatred, the abuse of all kinds we're all familiar with. That night in Biloxi I saw a little glimpse of how different things could be, that I bear with me through this fucked up world like a fragile egg, a seed, looking for fertile soil...

REPORT: SEVILLE

Sevilla, Spain Don't let Seville fool you. There have got to be more alternatives to silly dance music in discotecas than just the guy we once saw sitting on calle Tetuán, beating on a cardboard box and a bottle (which eventually broke) with sticks, and screaming in grindcore at the passersby. There is, for example, ITACA, a club where they play much better dance music (and gay porn movies) all night. Still, if you want to hear Ricky Martin sing "María" one more time, in Seville it is almost certainly possible.

But the best thing you could do with your time is probably to go sit by the river (preferably in the shade 11 months out of the year) and watch the water slide by. If you aren't lucky enough to know ESTHER, the most amazing person in Seville, you might not get to discuss feminism, fairy tales, and concepts of space and time as you brush your hair out of your face (it can be windy by the river), but there will still be those awesome, if overpriced, lemon GRANIZADAS to keep you company. Looking up at the moon as you cross over a bridge can also make one feel very sophisticated and Euro, especially if one is nei-

ther of those things, and therefore believes that that's what Euro sophisticates do on their way back from dim cafés full of other enviable characters. Starting on a long trip early in the morning and buying still-warm bread from a BAKERY can have the same effect, although it costs up to 40 cents more.

Another romantic spot is the PARQUE de Mariá Luisa, through which one might wander for hours, breathing in the sweet air and feeding the ducks tomatoes. It's also a good place to be taught how to dance sevillanas, although not, as I myself am evidence, a particularly good place to learn them.

ALEJANDRO will tell you hilarious jokes and play you Pixies songs on his guitar. Used to be you could sometimes find him with Raúl at the CARBONERIA. We're all getting older, though, so who knows?

I believe it is on Wednesdays that you can get into most of the cinemas in town two for the price of one, but you have to put up with the dubbing. John Travolta in Spanish is unquantifiably more intolerable than the already stultifying original. But one movie theater in town does show *good* foreign films, subtitled.

The place to go for cheap food is DIA, a discount grocery store where the service is poor, the aesthetics stark, the price right, and if you want one of *their* bags, you'll have to pay for it. Spanish BANANAS, by the way, besides not being tainted by so much la United Fruit Co.-style evil (they

come from the Canaries, for the most part), are unbelievably delicious. You will never look at one of those hard, mealy, bland (and super-corporate, too!) bananas in the same way again. My favorite TAPA is *espinacas*, spinach with chick peas and cumin (and, if you get the nasty cheap kind

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at ER MAS BARATO, way too much salt).

For cheap books, you can't beat BETA, but there are a bunch of great bookstores in Seville.

Other fun events are TAXI STRIKES, in which taxis fill up the main street in town and park there, honking and passing out fliers, and DOCTOR DEMONSTRATIONS, in which frustrated medics throw eggs and tomatoes at the building housing some health organization. Also keep your eyes open for free, city-sponsored cultural events, which might include a bizarre performance of *Elektra* involving several bathtubs, or Antonio Canales dancing in the ruins of a monastery on the outskirts of town.

Speaking of religion, the CATHEDRAL is amazing. Semana Santa (HOLY WEEK) would be spooky if there weren't so many people, and everyone is Catholic, but no one goes to church. The more enthusiastically followed religion is SOCCER, and the rivalry between Seville's two teams (Sevilla and Betis) is intense.

Tuna-spotting is a treasured activity, and when they're around, those university students in medieval garb (tights and all) playing lutes are hard to miss. ONCE members are much more ubiquitous, and almost as easy to spot. Americans are absolutely *everywhere*. Avoid them at all cost.

And if it's August, ignore all of the above. Just sit inside with a couple pitchers of sangría (you can substitute grape juice for wine) and a fan, and watch bullfights on TV or something.

REPORT: short-lived anarchist state at Fiume, eighty years ago

taken from Hakim Bey's book *Temporary Autonomous Zone*

Gabriel D'Annunzio, Decadent poet, artist, musician, aesthete, womanizer, pioneer daredevil aeronautist, black magician, genius and cad, emerged from World War I as a hero with a small army at his beck and command: the "Arditi." At a loss for adventure, he decided to capture the city of Fiume from Yugoslavia and give it to Italy. After a necromantic ceremony with his mistress in a cemetery in Venice, he set out to conquer Fiume, and succeeded without any trouble to speak of. But Italy turned down his generous offer; the Prime Minister called him a fool.

In a huff, D'Annunzio decided to declare independence and see how long he could get away with it. He and one of his anarchist friends wrote the constitution, which declared music to be the central principle of the State. The Navy (made up of deserters and Milanese maritime unionists) named themselves the *Uscocchi*, after the long-vanished pirates who once lived on local offshore islands and preyed on Venetian and Ottoman shipping. The modern *Uscocchi* succeeded in some wild coups—several rich Italian merchant vessels suddenly gave the Republic a future: money in the coffers! Artists, bohemians, adventurers, anarchists (D'Annunzio corresponded

with Malatesta), fugitives and Stateless refugees, homosexuals, military dandies (the uniform was black with pirate skull and crossbones—later stolen by the S.S.) and crank reformers of every stripe (including Buddhists, Theosophists, and Vedantists) began to show up at Fiume in droves. The party never stopped. Every morning D'Annunzio read poetry and manifestos from his balcony; every evening a concert, then fireworks. This made up the entire activity of the government. Eighteen months later, when the wine and money had run out and the Italian fleet finally showed up and lobbed a few shells

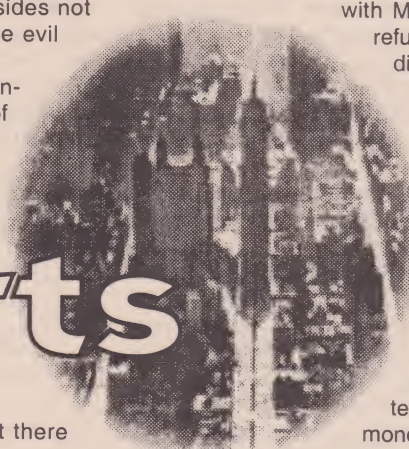
at the Municipal Palace, no one had the energy to resist. [For a similarly interesting precedent for anarchist communities, read the introduction to William Burroughs' *Cities of the Red Night*.]

REPORT: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Millions for Mumia

by Jon Ridenour

Saturday April 24, 5:30 AM — Anticipation of the coming days events sizzled in my mind, just barely peeking its nose up over the monotonous hum left in my brain after the hours of driving it had taken to get us here. Here — to Philadelphia, thought by some to be the armpit of America, a stale morsel of industrial revolution, having long since lost its luster. But this morning I knew better. A sunrise can transform even the most dismal scene into something that is beautiful. It was the dawn of a new day, and this one was beautiful beyond words.

Weeks of forwarded e-mails describing threats of police violence and preparatory discussions about mace and going limp provoked the images of tear gas and broken bottles that now lazily meandered through my unsettled mind; I wondered if I was as comfortable with the idea as I thought. Despite the presence of that ever so definitive 'I've been up for days' feeling in my guts, I was excited.



After a brief morning siesta and a short reunion with the old friends who provided us with housing for the weekend, we began our walk to meet up with one of the Millions for Mumia feeder marches, with whom we would then troop, banners high and voices loud, into downtown Philadelphia. We were a motley crew of crusty-eyed, nappy-headed punks; but things would soon brighten up. The sun was out, the sky was clear, and as more and more people gradually accumulated, a spirit of protest filled the air.

At this point, I was able to reassure myself about being glad I decided to come. Regardless of how effective our political protest would be, regardless of whether or not The Man would end up crushed by our marching feet and decimated by the unrelenting positivity of our attitudes, there is something powerful about a protest. To raise a fist in the air and experience the thrill of mass defiance, to shout out loud in a thousand voices, extending the proverbial "Fuck You" to all the abusive cops and authority addicts in the world, is an experience no conscious individual should miss. This is the feeling I came to Philadelphia for and this is what I would take with me when I left.

Some seven hours later, my friends and I stumbled back to our temporary home away from home, stomachs grumbling and pockets full of leftist propaganda; our eyes twice as crusty, hair twice as nappy, and minds twice as hazy as they had been earlier that morning. There had been no riot, no police interference, no throwing rocks, and no broken bottles, just lots of sunshine, lots of political rhetoric, and lots and lots of walking. I couldn't shake the feeling that our world was unchanged, just as racist and boring as it was when we left it that morning.

For me, Millions for Mumia was a learning experience. The organizers deserve to be commended for their hard work; but it is necessary to scrutinize their efforts and see what we can learn and take with us when we go to our next protest. For those of us who are unable or unwilling to buy ourselves access to the political system, the protest is our only weapon. Used incorrectly, the only fitting word is lame; walk right up to the edge of mediocrity and jump off. But when used effectively, the protest is a most powerful tool, capable of harnessing the power of the people, power to change our lives, power to destroy our enemies, and that's power to change the whole fucking world.

I look at the historical development of the political protest and I see a powerful tool that has changed and evolved over time. The protest has been violent and peaceful, joyous and morose; it has been effective and powerful, superfluous and a desolate waste of time. The Millions for Mumia protest demonstrated to me more than ever, that it is now time for a new era of protest. Just as the artists and the musicians, so must the protestors continually strive to break old habits and reinvent their creativity with every banner, every chant, and every march. The protest cannot cease to evolve; lest it and all the political and social change that it makes possible die a tragic death at the hands of boredom and mediocrity.

Before I begin my systematic criticism of the Millions for Mumia effort, I must highlight two positive aspects. First of all, I have never been to a protest so big. The march drew thousands of participants from all over everywhere. I met people from far away places like France and from bizarre places like Fargo, North Dakota. The sheer numbers alone were enough to have a political impact. Tens of thousands of marching protestors did not go unnoticed by the regional media. Proof of this was on my kitchen table when I arrived back home in North Carolina. Even our city paper, known for its oversight of important social issues, which I personally deem less informative than shit on a stick, ran an article on the fourth page. Large numbers and wide media coverage were the strong points of this protest.

Secondly, even if a protest totally sucks ass from a political point of view, there is always something to be gained on a personal level. I have never been to a protest that was an absolutely meaningless experience. In this world where I learned to be a subservient fucking sheep from the very beginning, where directions and instructions are shouted from every corner and enforced with threats of violence or social alienation, I snatch every opportunity I can to symbolically wipe my ass with their petty regulations, to take the face of their authority figure and pencil in a funny moustache. What did I gain from the march? Illumination.

In order to gain a sufficient perspective on the political effectiveness of the Millions for Mumia march, it is necessary to first outline the dynamics of political power in reference to the protest. The bottom line is this (read this part slowly): protests are successful to the extent that the reference publics of the protest target can be brought into the conflict on the side of the protestors. That being said, I will try to build my argument from the ground up.

The organizers of a protest must know their target. The protest target in the person or group who has the power to change the situation being protested. The reference public of the protest target must also be identified. The term "reference public" refers to the person or group to whom matters are referred by the protest target for decision, consideration, or settlement. The reference public has the power to influence the protest target. When the reference public is brought into the conflict on the side of the protestors, that person or group will use its influence to force the target into complying with the protest demands. The extent to which the reference public sides with the protestors determines how fast or slow (or not at all) the protest demands are satisfied. The point of the protest action must be to capture the attention of the reference public. There

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may be many targets and many reference publics, but this doesn't change the equation any. Individual targets must be selected and their reference publics identified; actions must be focused and decisive based on those selections. Based on this theory, Millions for Mumia fell short in several ways. Because I was unable to speak with the organizers themselves, I am in no position to report on their intentions but I will recount here the things I observed.

Assuming the protest targets of the march were elected officials of Philadelphia, it seems that the reference public at whom the march should have been directed was the citizens of Philadelphia. For it is the citizens of Philadelphia who make up the infrastructure that holds Mumia; they run the buses, deliver the mail, and brew the coffee, and thus, there is political power in them regardless of and in addition to their ability to influence their elected officials, which they can do by un-electing the sorry bastards. At Millions for Mumia, participation by the general public was conspicuously absent.

This being the case, the march should have been held on a Friday, not a Saturday. There was no one downtown who did not come for the rally. As my friends and I were leaving, we walked into a shopping district two blocks away that was full of people. There was no sign of a huge rally taking place with 20,000 people right around the corner. For these people, it was business as usual; they were completely unaware of the radical revolution that was self-implosion down at City Hall. On a Friday, 20,000 people marching through downtown would have caused a major disruption.

It is true that not as many people could have shown up for a rally on Friday. However, I think a protest that disrupts normal city activity with 10,000 or 5,000 people is more effective than a protest with 20,000 people who are harmlessly hanging out downtown preaching to their own converted. If there is a trade off between maximum numbers and maximum disruption, the choice must be the latter.

A second point along these same lines is that more time should've been given to the feeder marches and less time spent at the rally. A good feeder march is long and gradual, twisting it's way through the city, taking a wayward route so as to be seen by as many people as possible. The feeder marches at Millions for Mumia walked straight to the rally cite at City Hall, where we then remained stationary for the next five hours.

A third criticism has to do with the rally itself. I arrived at City Hall budding with fresh excitement, ready to smash the state and everything. After the first two speakers, the energy level of the rally began to diminish. When it was finally time for the big march through downtown to begin, my friends and I had to wipe the drool off our cheeks and peel ourselves up off the pavement where we had been sleeping like so many blobs of neglected pancake batter, left in the sun to congeal on the kitchen floor.

Whereas a rally is supposed to pump the crowd up and get everyone all ready to rumble, I spent a lot time feeling bored. Whereas a rally is supposed to encourage and empower the protester, I felt debilitated and unfocused. I attribute this effect to several factors. For starters, there were too many speakers. No matter how talented an orator may be, there is only so much that can be done to excite a crowd which has been numbed by hours of sloganeering and political rhetoric. Another thing that con-

tributed to my feelings of debilitation was the lack of audience participation. The Millions for Mumia rally was a spectator event and a successful rally is anything but. There was simply nothing to do at the rally but listen to the drone of political bravado. Don't get me wrong, there's nothing like a good fiery speech to get me pumped about freeing Mumia; but one or two will do.

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tributed to my feelings of debilitation was the lack of audience participation. The Millions for Mumia rally was a spectator event and a successful rally is anything but. There was simply nothing to do at the rally but listen to the drone of political bravado. Don't get me wrong, there's nothing like a good fiery speech to get me pumped about freeing Mumia; but one or two will do.

Millions for Mumia lacked the creativity and spontaneity that makes a protest powerful. A strong rally will not get stuck in a single medium of communication. The organizers of this march utilized only one way of carrying their message, constant speeches. Perhaps a better rally might have included a huge puppet show, some skits, a show of protest art, live music, a dramatization or reenactment, maybe even a comedy act or a juggler, all loosely and creatively centered around the message of the protest.

Perhaps the least appealing aspect of the day was the activist shopping mall set up near the stage. All the various "revolutionary" groups had claimed their spots to set up merchandising operations and traveling salesmen had been dispatched into the crowd to distribute buttons, newspapers, and squash pie (of all things). Every fifteen minutes someone approached me and tried to sell me something. The speakers on stage talked of "fire in the sky" and "turning this mutha fucka out," but down below there were only these wiry politicians competing with each other to see who could win the most converts, trying to sell me the new issue of their "revolutionary" paper and convince me to hop

on board their party program. By the end of the day, there was trash everywhere, leftist propaganda loosely lofting by in the wind.

Was it a worthwhile and fun experience? — Yes, absolutely. Am I glad that I went? — Sure, yea. Was it a successful political protest that will force the state of Pennsylvania to release Mumia Abu Jamal? — No, I doubt it. A few key elements were missing that were detrimental to the success of the protest. Failure to involve the general public, lack of civil disobedience and disruption of normal city activities, inability to make the "revolution" exciting, the constant presence of traveling salesmen, and the absence of essential creativity and spontaneity kept the march from achieving its full potential.

I walk away from Philadelphia impressed with the numbers, but disappointed with the method. American society is entering a new era and the protest must not be left behind. And I do not believe it will be. I know there are folks out there now, my friends and I among them, pasting together silly new contraptions and stringing up the puppets of resistance, preparing to do battle with the status quo. To the organizers of tomorrow's protests I say this: be inspired by the Millions for Mumia march, it was incredible! Learn from their mistakes and work hard to invent new and exciting ways to bring the protest to its full potential! Strive for the utmost! I will be trying myself and I know there will be others. Together, we will make this world a beautiful place.



Artistic Innovation, Punk Music, and Revolution

I've said this before, but I can't emphasize it enough—especially today when a war is being waged in hardcore between the purists who think it is a musical style which must remain “intact” and the kids who want to experiment with it and push the limits of the genre. The reason each of us is here in the hardcore scene in the first place is because we came across bands (whether Minor Threat, Youth of Today, or Acme) who seized us by our hearts and changed our lives, our views of the cosmos itself. These bands had such an effect on us because they were opening new worlds before us, showing us possibilities and ideas that we had never imagined. They did this by being artistically revolutionary—that is, they dared to do things that nobody had ever done before, things that literally made the world bigger and filled with more possibility. And they weren't just breaking with the mainstream and its values; they were breaking with all the ideas and art and styles that had come before. Otherwise what they were doing wouldn't have been new, and it wouldn't have grabbed us in a way that nothing else did or could.

It is no coincidence that it is the most conservative elements of the punk scene (whether that conservatism be disguised as athletic straight edge machismo or drunk punk fashion [semi-] consciousness) that want to keep us treading water in hardcore today, playing the same music over and over. They're not ready to be challenged anymore. They want to be safe, to keep everything categorized, predictable, harmless, so they won't be in danger of having to question their fragile identities or shift their footing. Is everything really so great as it is that we should just stop right here and try to freeze the music and ideas of today (or of yesterday, or of twelve years ago, for that matter) for all time? And how can you separate musical style from everything else? Aren't new musical ideas at least as important as new ideas of other kinds, when it comes to changing ourselves and the world?

It is revolutionary to make brand new art and music. It is revolutionary to make people feel new things, things they can't categorize, things they aren't ready for. In fact, without that revolution, no other kind has ever taken place—for people must have a reason to want change, must have feelings and ideas within them that refer to a different world than the one they are living in. Punk music started as a music revolution; and if it is to maintain any of its vitality, any of its meaning at all, it has to continue to be one. Punk music *must* be revolutionary, in every sense, for it to be punk music in the first place. Otherwise, what the fuck are we doing here? We came here looking for change, for danger, for new worlds. Our music has to stay alive to be able to guide us there.

That's why the next Youth of Today won't sound anything like Youth of Today. They'll sound like Refused, or something ten times crazier and unexpected. If we want to be true to the spirit of those old bands who mean so much to us, we have to do it by seeking new music that is as dangerous and profound as theirs was once upon a time. It is the responsibility of every punk and hardcore musician to do this, to keep the genre alive by taking it to new places. Without your efforts, hardcore dies, it's that simple. I'm never reminded of this more than when I'm doing reviews. In the middle of a sea of inevitably generic music, nothing is more precious than a record that reveals all the hidden power of the ideas that were already there by adding new ones; nothing matters more than these records, for without them, hardcore would fall dead in its tracks (and be carted off to a museum, like so many other genres of music that stopped growing and evolving). Please, if you care about us, about punk music, about life itself, make those records for us!

Editor D's top ten sources of inspiration from within the hardcore community:

1. Refused live in Belgium, North Carolina, and Virginia
2. Roby Newton's puppet shows (uh, does this count as hardcore?)
3. Refused CD
4. Self Conviction CD liner notes/A.T.R. #2
5. Morser vs. the Swarm split 7"/By All Means LP
6. Deadzibel! 7"/Rubbish Heap side of split 7"
7. Milemarker and Zegota live in a number of places...
8. By All Means live in Italy/Headway live in France/Ire live in North Carolina
9. Burn Collector #8/Lyrics to Simba #12 (recording project by David from Final Exit)
10. Eyelid's and Milhouse's songs on the "Living Silent" CD compilation

Editor D's top ten sources of inspiration from outside the hardcore community:

1. books by Jeanette Winterson
2. *Illume* by Andrea Rosenberg
3. Food Not Bombs/Critical Mass/Reclaim the Streets in Chapel Hill
4. "Revolution for the Hell of It" by Abbie Hoffman/"Do It" by Jerry Rubin
5. Diamanda Galas "Malediction and Prayer"
6. Dover live in Spain*
7. Godspeed, You Black Emperor! live in North Carolina**
8. plays by Peter Shaffer
9. books in the "For Beginners" series/"Spectacular Times" pamphlet series by Larry Law
10. "Life is Beautiful" (Italian movie)/"Pleasantville" (Hollywood movie, believe it or not!)/"Shakespeare in Love" (another movie)

*Dover is Gloria's and my favorite Spanish rock band. Their music has so much passion, desperation, and irrepressible energy in it, it can pass so perfectly from innocent optimism to tragedy, we're both crazy about it. When we were traveling through Spain, we kept coming across scraps of Dover posters that had been posted over on walls, and we were hoping to somehow get to see them before we left, since they're entirely unknown everywhere else. We had no luck until we were about to leave. Then, coming around a corner in Seville, we suddenly came face to face with a huge poster announcing a Dover show two days later in a neigh-

boring town! We didn't have any money left, but the promotions company had been unfortunate enough to leave their phone number on the poster. I used my last bills to buy a phone card, and called them up, informing them that I was a famous American rock critic on vacation with my girlfriend in Spain and that I'd be happy to go check out their band if they wanted. They bought it and put us on the guest list, and we ended up getting to hang out with Dover before the show and then again afterwards in their dressing room, sharing their food while hundreds of Spanish people waited outside for autographs. It was great to meet the band and speak with them, they were actually really cool people, and it was hilarious to be there as "American rock critics"! The show itself was excellent, too. The heart of Dover is the singer and the guitarist, who are sisters. The younger one, who sings, has the most captivating, energetic stage presence: when she's not up at the vocal microphone pouring her heart out in that tried and true rock'n'roll way, she's running around the stage, frantic, maniacal, a big smile on her face; she's genuinely fun to watch. And their songs are great, truly anthemic. They played for a full hour and a bit, while a thousand plus Spanish people cheered and rocked back and forth in front of the sizable stage. We got to watch them from the stage, next to the soundboard, American paparazzi that we are! They played some new songs, probably their best material, off an album that is supposed to be coming out just about now. If you know anyone in Spain, or you are visiting there and you listen to anything besides Acme, I would really recommend you try to find their new record. Promise the Spanish rock industry isn't paying me off to say this!

****Godspeed, You Black Emperor!** is a symphony of exactly the kind Norm wrote about in his letter in the letters section of this issue: it's a bunch of people who make music together, people with violins and cellos, four guys with guitars with different effects on them, two drummers, musicians playing various other instruments. Seeing them play was an incredible experience, they were able to do so much that a traditional rock band simply cannot. Their songs come off as vast improvisations, beginning softly with one or two players and building to crescendos of fearsome power as one by one all the other musicians join in playing different parts. At times it was like seeing Neurosis with a full orchestra. I was amazed and I'm desperate to see others do similar things. G,YBE! also has a CD out with some similarly exciting stuff on it, you can probably find it in various independent/indie rock stores, but you need to see them live most of all.

(Editor D's bottom ten for this issue...)

1. breaking off my relationship with the love of my life
2. watching the marriage of one of my best friends come to a ruinous end
3. watching the Catharsis van burn to a heap of ashes and bleached metal (with some of our stuff inside, including all my bedding)
4. giving up on my friendship with former blood brother Paul F. Maul
5. not having enough money to keep up with our projects, let alone eat
6. being deathly ill with no heat or food or transportation
7. the Czech translator who made a joke out of everything I said (fuck him!)
8. the Black Bag incident

9. Ernie breaking one of his legs, then getting gangrene in the other
10. getting caught shoplifting in Sweden/getting caught trainscamming in Spain

Gloria's 10 Steps to a Better, More Beautiful You

1. *Weetzie Bat* by Francesca Lia Block
2. *Shades of Fear* (movie)
3. *Cranes, Wings of Joy* CD
4. Dover live
5. *Where the Girls Are: Growing Up Female with the Mass Media* by Susan J. Douglas
6. eating cherries fresh off the tree on a hot summer day in Italy
7. art by Erika Nawabi
8. Godspeed, You Black Emperor! live
9. *The Hour of the Star (A Hora da Estrela)* by Clarice Lispector
10. *Shakespeare in Love*, in spite of the hype

Last-minute review-layer outer Andy's top 11 for expression over originality (I could give a rat's ass about your new way out sound, I liked Minor Threat (and YOT and Acme) because I could identify with the feelings conveyed by exemplary performances that took advantage of the qualities of their particular aesthetic, not particularly because it was 'new' to me. Style and originality are only a means to an end. If your band sucks, it sucks, even if you are sucking as no one has ever sucked before. [pc note: notice I used 'suck' (slang for felatio) in an ambiguous nature, neither implying it to be good or bad! I win! Eh, fuck you anyway.] However, if you're going to 'rock it old style', you'd damn well better rock or your artistic shortcomings will condemn you to the 'same old shit' pile.), in no particular order:

1. Detestation - everything
2. Life's Blood 7" (yes, the old one. it took me a while to bother tracking it down because their songs on "Where The Wild Things Are" weren't exactly gems.)
3. Gauze - 7" on Prank and CD on XXX.
4. Indecision live and "To Live and Die..." CD
5. Speak 714 - 'real audio' sample from new 7"
6. Septic Death - "Crossed Out Twice" CD
7. "All Systems Go" comp
8. Gordon Solie Mother Fuckers - live and 7"
9. Swarm - live (the 7" is great, but a touch too muddy)
10. Detroit and Toledo hardcore bands live and recorded. Given the personal relationships that exist between us, these expressions, where ever they may fall in the spectrum of originality, mean a lot to me and probably everyone else involved in this real community.
11. My forthcoming debate with Editor D regarding originality vs. expression and my usage of the the reviews section for critiques of the editorial regime's proclamations when he has no opportunity to respond or even proofread this. But that's what he gets for sending me this at the last minute.*



*All in good fun, right? After all most 'hardcore' kids couldn't get off their fucking internet message boards long enough to put together a project like this at all. And I probably would have waited until the last possible minute as well, but such is life.

RECORD REVIEWS

If you are a friend of ours, and you gave us your record or 'zine to review while we were in Europe last summer, consult the introduction to the letters section a few pages back. There, you will read the tragic tale of the Black Bag incident, and come to understand why you don't see your stuff reviewed here. Sorry... what a fucking disaster. Again.

All major label releases (or releases from capitalist, major label wanna-be "hardcore" labels such as Revelation) received for review will be sent to third world hardcore labels and distributors as donations. Please keep sending them!

And now here's the bad news: there were a couple other things that didn't get reviewed this time around. We get so much stuff in here that at the end, when there were about fifty pages to be finished in week, there just wasn't time to do a real review for every single record. We only left a few out, and we tried to pick the ones that seemed to have gotten to us by accident. So if you're reading this, and we missed your record, there's already been a mistake made. If that's case, I'm really sorry, that sucks... next time we'll be sure to take care of you. It's just not possible to give every record and 'zine that comes in a 1000 word review when there are more than two hundred of each coming in.

Secret reviewer codes:

b — your humble editor

@ — literary genius and life-support system gloria cubana

jug — greg "comes as fuck" bennick

n — noodle boy—soapbox prophet, eater of worms, diseased flagellant.

.fuckingcom "7": It turns out I put on the b-side first by accident, but anyway... it starts with an infectious heartbeat rhythm, a fast beat like the heart of a man who has been running from someone and now crouches panting in some precarious hiding place. The guitars dance over the heartbeat, flickering on and off like a candle in a steady draft. It's a relief after all the straight metal/hardcore bangbangbang I've been listening to in the course of these reviews. Inevitably the bangbangbang comes in again, with screaming and punk chord progressions, but it's punctuated throughout the rest of the record by more interesting parts like that intro where the age-old guitar/bass/drums combination somehow make as-yet heard sounds. Though they do play some pretty traditional punk rock parts (yeah, screaming, fast drums, simple chord progressions), .fuckingcom has their own thing going on here; I can't easily compare them to anyone else, thanks largely to their atmospheric parts in which they manage to get their organic instruments to create synthetic-sounding environments. They seem to have a different aesthetic production-wise than most of today's other hardcore/punk bands, too: it sounds like they're going for more treble in their sound, and I think they must be fucking with the traditional punk recording mix to get some of those strange parts. The lyrics deal with pretty well-covered anarchist social issues, but it comes off like the lyricist is telling stories from her (I think it's 'her') own experience, rather than parroting abstractions. —b

Prank, address below

A Sometimes Promise "CD": When we were sitting in the kitchen listening to this CD discography of sorts ('we' of course, meaning myself and my secret agent 'Cynthia X') she commented, when I started bouncing up and down to the beat, that "That's exactly the type of dance I envision being done to this music... sort of like the Peanuts' dance." This is a poppy romantic emo record with distorted and acoustic electric guitars/parts alternating. Good for them for using a gong and tympani! That rules, though I would have hated to be the fucking guy who had to carry the tympani into shows

every night on tour... I like the music for the most part, and the lyrics, while not out to inspire revolution by any means, are poetic and filled with love and lost love. This falls into the realm of emotionally charged bands like State Route 522, Waxwing, etc, and is good, with varying dynamics and catchy riffs throughout except... (goddamn it, why does there always have to be an 'except'?)... except, for the vocals, which sound out of tune and a bit whiny and uninspired. Cynthia said about them that "I wish he would sing more often... I'd like that better." Cynthia is really perceptive when it comes to reviewing. After she made that last comment, she then said "There is a wok full of water balanced on the sink, so be careful" which I can only assume is a comment on a level higher than I could ever possibly reach as a reviewer, so I leave you now to interpret her words for yourselves. JUG and X \$7 from Association of Welterweights; P.O. Box 1431; Ojai CA 93024

Aclys "Helduntergang" CD: Beautiful color layout, but everything's in German, so I can't tell you much about their lyrics or ideas. The music comes in with a bang, literally, a sample of bombing that segues well into some explosive modern German hardcore, blazing further progress down the road that begins with a signpost reading "Acme." They use a fair bit of chaotic melody, bursts of blastbeat with a clear ride cymbal, high shrieking, double bass sometimes and tight, complex drumming throughout. Hey, the second song cuts out the chaos at one point in favor of a clearer, cleaner melodic part; that's exactly the sort of variety they're going to need to maintain interest through fourteen more songs. Let's see if they do it. The seventh song has a great opening where they don't kick the full quality recording in until a few measures into the song. There are similar pretty melodic lines in the third song and most others, that's gonna get them through an EP, but a full length? There's plenty of energy and skill here, they just need a bit more catchiness and they'll be right there. That is to say, this is a great record, if you had it and you shared my tastes I imagine you'd put it on fairly frequently, but you wouldn't ever find yourself singing the songs to yourself. That's the difference between a good record and a great one, a good one is exciting to listen to but a great one infects

you, takes you over, remakes you in its own image. Anyway, I'd love to see them play, I'm sure they're incredible to watch. —b

Per Koro, Markus Haas, Fehrfeld 26, 28203 Bremen, Germany
Ahriman "CD": Totally d.i.y. home-burned CD here. Stylistically, they're working in the territory opened up by West Coast bands like Gehenna and Unruh: gruff, feral vocals, dirty metallic music (heavier on the dirt than the metal, unlike their colleagues Fall Silent), dark and scary atmosphere (when everything works right, at least). I don't think they've gotten to the level of either of the aforementioned bands, but that's a tough order in the first place. The high points for me came in the fourth song (back-and-forth vocals that really upped the intensity level) and the sixth song (a break with a weird guitar noise that brought in the next part)... though on successive listens, I realized there was more variety and exploration going on than I'd thought at first. The vocals rely on the hiss/growl thing that I think sometimes keeps screaming vocals from sounding as human as they need to in order to work, but the singer is not unqualified for his role by any means. The last song uses an acoustic guitar that doesn't really appear elsewhere... I think at this point it's less predictable (and better for the sake of variety) not to use one of those, actually. But they've probably figured that out. —b

P.O. Box 70911, Reno, NV 89570
Angels in the Architecture "One Ten" CD: OK, I don't like this. It's would-be pretty, melodic rock music with not-too-polished melodic/melodramatic singing over it, lots of semi-acoustic stuff, occasional rock guitar, not particularly interesting arrangements or songwriting or riffs, probably some "post-

1332 "7": God, this is so deep and dirty and rumbling that I'm not even sure if 33 rpm is the right speed, but I sure hope it is, because this is fucking awesome... OK, damn it, I just checked, and I did have it at the wrong speed! This is one of those rare records that actually sounds right (no, better) at the wrong speed. But even at 45, without the slow, pounding sludge, it's still great: it's discordant and abrasive enough to clean even the most sticky-sweet emo out of your system, it sounds genuinely manic, deranged, filthy... this is definitely not a record you could take home to your parents. The lyrics read like something out of William Burroughs: "Meet me at the midnight train... train me for the midnight meat; bile runs sticky down the aisles, blood is splattered on the seats, a subterranean rendezvous awaits us in car #2..." The vocalist sounds like he gargles with gravel and a chaser of kerosene. The atmosphere is pitch black, descending a long escalator into unknown regions, unable to make out what is at the bottom... and when the band gets going, deformed beasts and demons fly around your head, snapping at your ears, the hiss and screech of a train arriving below to bear you into the nether regions... —b

Prank, address elsewhere within

RECORD REVIEWS

hardcore" kids who liked Sunny Day Real Estate and didn't realize that it's not so easy to make that kind of music really work. I'm trying hard to have something else to say, but I'm not the man to talk about this kind of music, especially when it *doesn't* work. I will say this: after years of resistance, I was finally forced to listen to that first Sunny D.R.E. record and admit that it's powerful stuff... but that *does not* mean I have to say there's any reason for records like this one to exist. God, the lyrics are bland, everything about this just makes me suffer. —b

1%, P.O. Box 141048, Minneapolis, MN 55414

April "7": Lyrics and titles in German, so I can't tell you much about content on the spur of the moment here. It starts with a sample that I think is from Star Wars, if that's any help, but all the other samples are in German, too. April begins with the German hardcore assault of noise and distortion and screaming, then they pull back and add some Slayer-esque metal melodies, before blasting off again. The next time they change course it is to incorporate high harmonics in between the low chords, and they manage to construct a pretty fearsome mosh part out of that arrangement. The second side begins with overwhelming double bass, screaming in the background, indecipherable chaos from the guitars, and although it gets a tiny bit clearer at the first transition for a second, after that it's almost unabated smash and crash insanity. The recording itself isn't unclear, it's the riffs and arrangements themselves that are designed to be absolutely overpowering. They use tom rhythms, double bass, lots of tempo changes, blastbeats, guitar riffs that alternate between discordant high notes and earth-shaking low chords, every weapon they can get their hands on to assault the listener. There's so much of this going on in Germany right now that it's getting hard for me to distinguish the best records from the good ones... lots of them do really great things, I just wonder which ones will still be just as important to people in five or ten years. Despite the high intensity level and musical mastery April demonstrates here, I doubt this will be among the top ten German hardcore records people remember from the late '90's, just because there are catchier bands in the genre. —b

There are three labels given on the back of this record, one of which has two addresses listed, and one of which (a label which uses the famous photograph of international terrorist "Carlos the Jackal" for their logo) gives none... faced with such confusion, I'm gonna give you the address of my friend Dennis, who I know is dependable, who is part of one of these labels: Scene Police, D.P.M., Auf dem Stefansberg 58, 53340 Meckenheim, Germany

Arise "7": Arise was an interesting phenomenon, one of the few American metal/hardcore bands (Starkweather being another, similar one) from the mid-'90's that was experimenting with the genre, trying hard to take it to new places. They managed to find their way to a new place, but nobody followed them, for some reason, so they've been largely (and undeservedly) forgotten. That new path they carved out through unexplored territory ended on a cliff ledge, I guess, and there's just a skeleton left there, now, the wind whistling these songs through its teeth. There is only one song on each side of

this record, each one a long exploration of missing links and evolutionary dead ends of twisted, manic, compulsive metal. The first song begins with a spooky acoustic part, played in a weird key that makes my skin crawl. When the distorted guitars come in, they refuse to play one riff but instead wander edgily through variations on a number of themes. The second song gets down to business faster, leaping into one contorted rhythm, and then another, the singer spitting words like foul-tasting venom. He had a unique vocal style, wrenching every syllable from his throat like a thorn pulled from

a wound, hissing, growling, the high, constricted wails and moans inflicting suffering upon the listener as well as himself. The lyrics, too are strange, written with a different logic and form than any of their contemporaries'. I don't think this will happen, but I hope that looking back on the '90's, people in the next decade will remember Arise and Starkweather more clearly than bands like Overcast. —b
Infidel, P.O. Box 1160, Vineyard Haven, MA 02568

Birtheright "Out of Darkness" CD: If you could build a time machine, would you choose to go back to the time when vegan straight edge dinosaurs ruled the land, putting X's on either side of their band and song names with straight faces, considering a string of e-chunk riffs to constitute a song, writing songs with choruses like "these words run in my veins" 'explained' by texts like "these are more than just words, they are what I believe... they make me what I am." Personally, I wouldn't. But I think Birtheright would: they've got all that stuff going on here, even the guitar harmonic divebombs that came into popularity with Vegan Reich and were driven into the ground by the time Green Rage made a whole 7" out of them. OK, I've got to give this to them, their music isn't quite as predictable as my description thus far would give you to believe, but they were Earth Crisis's contemporaries a few years back and they haven't wandered far aesthetically since then. There are only three little studio songs on here, the others are taken from a live recording that sounds like it must have been taped from middle of the crowd. The gap between those two recordings is filled with a recording, I believe from the famous Syracuse New Year's Eve show when the Path of Least Resistance cashed in their fifteen minutes of fame to play their only show, of a call and response chant: "What do we want?" "Animal liberation!" "When do we want it?" "Now!" I have a couple vegan animal liberationist friends

who were at that show, and they told me, in separate instances, how scared they felt by the apparent single-mindedness of the kids in attendance. I want animal liberation right now, too, you know. But I also want to move beyond a situation where any slogan can sum up what we feel and care about, where we never chant in unison... it feels so good to feel like you're part of a fearsome mob, but that's the root of any kind of fascism or majority rule. Our animal liberation must be part of a broader movement to liberate ourselves and our planet in every way, to stop thinking and living in ways that involve dominating each other. I think a part of that is moving beyond politics that can be summed up in catchphrases, and I think that an increasing understanding of this in the hardcore community is one of the reasons that the single-issue vegan straight edge band is largely a thing of the past now. —b

Acacia "Untune the Sky" CD: Really well-recorded, chaotic, discordant metal-influenced hardcore with a really dark, hypnotic atmosphere. It was recorded in New York, and I was trying my hardest to figure out how this could be an American band (since almost all the good music this issue, especially the stuff in this vein, is from outside the USA, for some reason) when I saw the band's address: they're from Canada, of course. The screaming vocals are unintelligible, grainy, drawn out and overlapped in a way that reminds me of Gehenna vocals. Here's a few words of the lyrics, so you'll know what to expect: "filled with sorrow I release the violence, decaying memories left surrounding reflections upon our suffering..." The guitars are tuned really low, and share with the bass a really deep, bone-rattlingly aggressive sound. The tempo seldom picks up much, but there's enough going on between the guitars to maintain the mood at this slow to medium pace. The drummer also understands how to add the variety through fills, etc. to maintain tension and interest. The mix and production really are great, without them I don't know if this would work nearly as well, but they create exactly the bleak, destroyed soundscapes this music needs to connect. The songwriting isn't exactly wandering, but each song is an exploratory venture across those vast landscapes, none too rushed. No samples to speak of that could detract from the power of what's happening here. I'm listening to the final song now, we've nearly reached the end, and one guitarist is playing a grim dirge by himself on the acoustic channel, as distant, unrecognizable noises echo behind him like thoughts a man cannot admit to himself. Now the band comes in one more time, in full dramatic fury, to escort me to the very edge of the mortal world, pulling back just in time. And Jesus Christ, just when it seems like they've gone as far as they can, the track continues on into even bleaker worlds, turning out to be a full fifteen minute long descent into metal improvisation and claustrophobia. This is a band to be reckoned with, a band of monstrous and fearsome capabilities, at least on record, on this record. —b

Goodfellow, 762 Upper James Street, Suite 275, Hamilton, Ontario, L9C 3A2 Canada

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Good Life

Breakfall "Words So Softly Spoken": - Timing in at 14 plus minutes for four songs, this is a good mix of old and new hardcore styles. From the old, we get patterns in the guitar work and vocals which are recognizable from past hardcore bands and releases. From the new, there is a heavier guitar sound, with fuller distortion and gruffer more aggressive vocals. Mixing the two together separates this from the norm, though I do wish the songs themselves were more aggressive and intense: I want this band to tear my head off musically and lyrically, and I know they can do it (as is evidenced by the occasional break/catchy hook/different choice). I wanted to hear more of the creativity they've scatter throughout the record on a regular basis. Lyrically, the words are a bit vague but remain throughout in the personal vein. Personal lyrics are hard to interpret for me, and maybe an interview with the band would shed some light on what is going on here. Hey! There is an idea zine editors: get in touch with these guys and find out what they are all about and if they have recording plans for another release. I wanted to hear and feel more of the band as people, really getting a feel for what makes them tick, but it wasn't there in these four songs. I have faith though. There's enough metal here to keep the metalhardcoreheads interested, and enough HC to keep me going. The hints are definitely there, and I want to be the one to review their next release because it'll rule if they let themselves continue to move against the grain. This is the award winner for longest label address. JUG

Strength in An Age of Weakness Records: 65 Lisle Hill Road; Glenarm; Ballymena, Co. Antrim; N. Ireland; BT44 0DT

Bridgewater "In One Act" 7": An interesting release. The record is presented as a play actually, rather than as a two sided record...meaning that the entire project is deemed a "one act" and the three songs, rather than being identified as such, are instead referred to as "scenes". This motif is extremely effective, as it creates a vessel in which an idea can be presented as the sum of individual parts, rather than having a concept represented as fragmented bits and pieces. The music here is melodic and uptempo with vocals which alternate between being sung in emotional desperation and screamed in physical agony. Lyrics are somewhat vague throughout "the irony manifest itself in silhouette / to stone I seem my fault / my being", which was a bit frustrating, especially after being presented with the

By All Means "Fino a qui... tutto bene!" 12": This is one of the more important records to come out this year, for me. I'm thankful that there are still bands like By All Means who take their role as radical d.i.y. artists/revolutionaries seriously, as the lyrics, politics, and explicitly d.i.y. nature of this release show. The intro starts out a little slow, with speaking (a sample?) in Italian that is unfortunately wasted on me, but it soon shifts gears, doubling the pace, and an African percussion section comes in behind the music, playing at a thousand beats per minute, lifting us into the stratosphere at twice the speed of sound (any other sound, that is!). The songs themselves are not written far outside the tradition of modern hardcore punk (battering slow parts, spooky and tense like the night as you drive to your armed liquor store robbery, fast parts like an automobile spinning, skidding out of control, blastbeats like locking brakes and car accidents), but the riffs and songs themselves are all new—and when they add the double bass behind the finale chorus at the end of a song, it is as if I have never heard it before. Their best moments are absolutely anthemic, songs that will play in my head behind the barricades and before the magistrates. The vocalist executes his role with grim determination, his deep, roaring baritone ringing out as if over a battlefield. The production is grimy, thick and coarse in the best punk tradition, without anything being obscured. The guitars aren't tuned down past "e," unlike so many other bands these days, and that takes a little getting used to, though it doesn't hold them back any more than the slightly discordant tuning. As for packaging—and this is one of the really awesome things about the record, the extensive writings, the ideas expressed in the insert—they use the same Situationist slogans and Raoul Vaneigem quotes that are becoming common in political hardcore circles, but they go far beyond that. It comes across that they're writing about things that really matter, that are real parts of their lives, that go beyond the realm of abstract politics and enter the world of personal struggle and life: not only in their texts about their struggles with the necessity of life-wasting work in the capitalist economy, but especially in the writing about the constrictive gender and sex roles that are forced upon us, the way our wild and unique desires are caged, reviled, denied. When they write about trying to create new lifestyles, new ways of relating, thinking, acting in the world, I feel like they really mean it. Their explanation of why they sing (and write, primarily) in Italian, as a gesture of resistance to the colonialism of the English language, is similarly touching. -b

By All Means Autoproductions c/o Matteo Verri, CP6, 41100 Modena 7, Italy

By All Means live in la Scintilla squat, Modena, Italy, June 1998: By All Means' singer is huge, not tall but thick set, and tattooed from the soles of his feet to the top of his scalp. He looks like he left the foolish, self-destructive society of the white man behind a long time ago, looks genuinely otherworldly. When they performed, he sat, barefoot, legs crossed in the lotus position like Buddha, sweat streaming over his marked and colored body, hunched forward to roar out the single notes of his vocals. For us, it was more like witnessing the performance of an ancient, solemn ritual than watching a hardcore vocalist sing. And the rest of the band leaped around him, jumping and spinning and stamping and swaying, the guitarists breaking strings incessantly, always pausing to repair them at lightning, well-practiced speed before proceeding. They never managed to get in tune the whole show, and it didn't matter at all. Between songs the singer spoke, deep and serious, and the fresh-faced young Italian anarcho-criminal beside me translated for me as he spoke of their political goals and ideas, his experiences in our fucked up, prejudiced society (and scene), etc. The drummer, too, was incredible, as the drummers of all great bands must be, and at the end of the set they finished with a bold, violent improvisation. Finally, as the guitarists took down their equipment, the drummer continued beating his drums, with slower and slower frequency, until it was one random hit every twenty seconds, then thirty, forty, as we all waited, tense and teased.

concept of the play structure. Not that I want simplistic lyrics or concepts, but to place vague lyrics in such a challenging packaging wasn't the strongest choice for this record...there is a lot more room to fill if you are going to use the theatrical metaphor to its fullest potential. Simply calling a record a one act play is trite unless the value of the music as play shows though clearly. What I get from the lyrics here is a struggle for personal emotional freedom. Maybe I am up too late. Maybe I have listened to too many records tonight. Maybe I am missing something. The band should feel free to write me if I am in fact not seeing something, and I would be happy to forward back to Brian D their response for printing in the next issue of this haphazardly thrown together useless excuse for a rock and roll magazine. Or, readers can expand this review for themselves by writing the band directly and asking about the concept: Bridgewater, 7005 Beech Avenue, Baltimore MD, 21206-1212 or (bridgewater.xxedgexx.com) JUG SAMOB, P.O. Box 1931, Erie PA 16507-0931

Burn It Down "Eat Sleep Mate Defend"

CD: Musically, I think these guys are working some of the ground explored earlier by bands like Deadguy, only with less complexity and challenge. They use a lot of chunky parts, alternated with places where the guitarists hit open chords and the drums play at a straight midtempo. The singer has a deep screaming voice, sometimes he pauses to speak (sometimes with distortion on his voice), and I imagine you can imagine pretty well what this sounds like by now. The recording is good enough to keep this from sounding bad, and there are enough changes and urgency and competency here to make it all work well enough; but there's not too much innovating or emoting going on, the band is not bringing themselves into much danger. At least the songs end before they get boring, and there are places at the end of the third and sixth songs where they get chaotic enough that they almost cut the safety line that ties them to the musical tradition they work from. There's a tension also in the lyrics: B.I.D. are another Christian band that believes that even though they are singing about Christian stuff like "being more than our bodies," what they have to say is relevant to everybody. I'm not so sure. Anyway, if this is the only record you've ever heard in this style, you'll probably really enjoy it; but if you have a Coalesce record sitting around somewhere, this probably won't replace it in your stereo. -b

Escape Artist, P.O. Box 363, West

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Chester, PA 19381-0363

Canvas "CD: This is good. It's fairly simple heavy screaming modern hardcore stuff, but it has a good powerful recording, and energy enough to connect; and every time you think they're about to get boring, they stop and do something you didn't expect (example: the way the first song ends with a hanging, flanged chord). The second song starts with the grainiest, thickest bass sound I've heard in at least ten reviews, and the singer's shrieking voice is trebly and raw enough to work in the same way the Acme guy's voice did. The guitars too have a really powerful, thick, weighty sound. They're not afraid to use blastbeats when they have to, either, which is a welcome relief from bands who couldn't abandon that moshy midtempo drumbeat if their careers depended on it (and I hope soon they do!). I like the way the blurry, irrationally cropped photos in the insert work, too: they suggest craziness without giving anything away. This is a compilation of different recordings, but they don't show much change in quality until the last song, which isn't as well-mixed as the others. Here's a last note: the ninth song begins sounding like a Slayer version of S.O.D.'s "March of the S.O.D.," though I don't think it's deliberate. —b

Household Name, address at the foot of the Medulla Nocte CD review

Caustic "7": It's to their credit, I think, that their first song is entitled "on november eleventh nineteen ninety nine the wenises will begin their attack which will eventually result in the eradication of the entire human race" (and their other song is called "Luigi and the Wise Guys"). On the other hand, I swear I just heard the riff that opens this record at the beginning of another record two reviews ago: chunk chunk, chunk open chord, chunkchunk harmonic chunkchunk harmonic. Sing it to yourself and you'll realize just how overplayed it is. After that it gets somewhat better, their song structures don't prove to be as predictable as their riffs themselves—there are some interesting arrangements, and a lot of changes in mood and texture, that all go smoothly. Their singer's speaking parts bother me, they seem uncomfortable somehow; on the other hand I like his voice when he screams, he knows how to use it to do some powerful roars and long, high screams. Near the end of the first song he tries some horrible melodic singing, like Damad if Victoria didn't know how to sing... he does the same thing at the beginning of the song on the other side, actually, maybe he thinks he's trying to incorporate emo melodic vocals into this? Or perhaps it's bands like V.O.D. that are leading him astray? Hm. If he can get it to start working, they'll be quite an original band (provided they lose that generic riff!). I hope that happens, I can tell they have real potential here, and I'm not just being nice. Even the lyrics (poetic, vague, filled with an ominous sense of foreboding) are well done, and that's pretty rare. —b

D & A records, P.O. Box 1959, Kingston, PA 18704

Chalkline "In the Present Tense" CD: Finally, an emo band that asks the question that has been on all of our minds: "where have the mighty scholars gone?" And they answer it for us: "replaced by indecision!" they allege, slandering the intelligence of one of New York's only remaining decent bands. OK, OK, I'm being a fucking jerk taking things out of context, but what the fuck am I supposed to do with lyrics like "we have a proclivity for predetermined thoughts and it's scary, where have the mighty scholars gone?" After reviewing fifty other fucking CDs that run the gamut from half decent to ab-

solutely derivative and terrible, when I hear some guy singing those lyrics at me in a polished sugar-sweet rock voice, there's nothing I can do to maintain my sanity except make fun of them. Where have all the mighty scholars gone? Give me a fucking break! If that's really important to you, Mr. Chalk Line Mother Fucker, I'll give you the address of the philosophy professor I did my Nietzsche thesis under once upon a time, and you can go argue with him about Heidegger's misinterpretation of Platonic ideas. Sounds like fucking fun! Almost as fun as listening to this emocore CD with its aforementioned high sugarsweet vocals, constant midtempo major key electric guitar riffs,

occasional predictable emo acoustic parts... these poor kids, I just picked up their CD for review at the wrong moment, I guess; not that I would have really liked it before, but I wouldn't have been so full of venom. Still, it can get frustrating wading through a sea of mediocre music, hoping desperately to have your faith in hardcore and life in general saved by some CD, only to keep running into bland CDs like this. I'm sure you unfortunate music consumers can relate... This is smoothly done enough, like I said, too smooth, that's the problem. All sugar and packaging and gloss, zero calories, for me at least. At least it's d.i.y., unlike most music in this fucking style. And by the way, no, the rest of the lyrics aren't much better. —b

Shandle, P.O. Box 1032, Mentor, OH 44061-1032

Chapter "The Bloodthirsty Hate the Upright" CD: Here's another discography of a band that was ahead of their time, let's see if it holds up now. As with the Corrin discography, I'm actually terrified by how current this sounds, it means we haven't really gotten anywhere in the last couple years, at least not in USA we haven't. There are a lot of fast, death metal style double-picking riffs here, with double bass parts here and there, some generic chunky hardcore riffs, and the rare acoustic moment. The vocalist does a lot of that high, torn screaming thing that became so dreadfully common shortly after these records first came out, but there are also a lot of more experimental speaking and whispering parts laced into the songs (not all entirely successful, however). Chapter's lyrics were above average ("a culture of the damned, a tourniquet on the land") and that helps here, at least. The recording

should pack more punch than it does, though it's not unclear by any means; the samples are a little loud too. ...OK, I've finished listening to it, and my verdict is that Chapter's music feels less important to me now than it did at the time, mostly because of the weak production and occasional dearths of tightness in the performances. Some of the same kids are still making hardcore music now, in Creation Is Crucifixion, and that's what we should be listening to, not the music they made when they were still cutting their teeth as hardcore musicians. —b

Eyewitness, P.O. Box 1, 27340 Criquebeuf, France

Coalesce "Functioning on Impatience" CD: There should be hardcore graphic arts awards, I think that would make sense at this point. And the people from Second Nature should get one for this layout, it's so beautiful, I'm sure all the other hardcore record labels are salivating with jealousy. The insert booklet is done on translucent vellum (I think this is what vellum is) with anatomical illustrations that come together when the pages are laid against each other like in a textbook. As for the music—well, Coalesce never got quite so far as to be music for me. Clearly, there's a lot of hard work and precision that goes

Cwill "Beyond Reality" CD: This is proof that if you've got heart, your music doesn't need anything else, neither a perfect recording nor complex songwriting nor anything else. This is those rare records that will come with you into the deepest pits of hopelessness and self-loathing, will stay with you and guide you quietly to safety. Without records like this there are plenty of people in hardcore who would no longer be alive. It's a dark trip, through palpable pain and desperation, something like what *Those Who Fear Tomorrow* was for many of us in the early '90's. Old Integrity is definitely the point of departure aesthetically here, with the simple yet memorable hardcore riffs, fast drumming, deep roaring vocals mixed a little low to emphasize their torn agony and aggression. One of the strokes of genius Cwill adds to this equation is a violin that comes in on some songs to add a melancholy beauty to the desperate music; it plays the simplest, saddest melodies, taking us through worlds of ruined grandeur, to the peace of the bloodsoaked battlefield and the silent room of the suicide. This is most touching at the end of the record, when, after nine songs of violence and mortal terror, of throat-bloodying, blood-curdling shrieking, the singer (his voice hoarse in shreds) whispers "redemption—please save me... save me from myself," behind the gently absolving violin and the brutal guitars and drums. Another song I like a lot challenges would-be militant hardcore kids to live up to their words: "where's the power you talk about, the action after the words of war I don't see, these are not the burning hearts you want to be"—and at the end, a shouted chorus repeats, sending shivers up and down my spine: "your signs and marks are not enough, fighting youth, march to the edge." At the end of the CD are four more songs of equal feeling and power (if slightly rougher recording), I imagine it's an older 7" recording of theirs. —b

Prawda, Scholastikastr. 24, 9400 Rorschach, Switzerland

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into what they're doing, but as far as expressing emotion goes, I've never felt like they quite got there. Their material is just so monotone and monotonous I always felt like I was having my brain sandblasted without my heart being touched at all. They come closer to injected variety into their writing on this record than they ever have before, starting the first song with the vocals alone (though I've also never liked the flat, monotone way their singer intones his words) is a good idea, and there are some places in the other songs where the guitars do something (funk noise, high notes...) besides the repetitive grooves I've come to expect in ceaseless barrages from these guys. The second track here is an extended noise experiment that doesn't really take me anywhere emotionally either. I guess their aesthetic is just completely different from mine: I tend to go for abandon, for madness, emotional extremes and excessiveness, and Coalesce really seem to value accuracy and sheer "heaviness" above all else. Otherwise, how could their singer sing the same fucking note over and over for three entire records without ever getting tired of it?? —b

Second Nature, P.O. Box 11543, Kansas City, MO 64138

Comrades "The End" 7": I've always wanted to like Comrades (how could you not want to like a straight edge grind band—the first one of their kind, too, pre-dating Monster X—that played in hockey masks and disguises?) but hadn't had much luck until now. It's going a little more smoothly for me this time, I think. This 7" begins with a spare sludge part, everything dragging, and then picks up dramatically, gathering steam... then the vocals come in, and they've always been the main sticking point for me. Bad grindcore vocalists always concentrate more on having deep, scary vocals than they do on expressing emotion with their voices, and that always seemed like the case with their singer; I'm not sure if I'm ready to change that opinion yet, but his singing bothers me less here. The music itself is not just blastbeats, it also contains slower parts, even a little groove/mosh stuff here and there. The recording isn't too great but works well enough, which is impressive since the liner notes claim it was done for the equivalent of \$45. At the end of the first side they cover the "Firestorm" riff by Earth Crisis, ending it with a nasty noise—to express their disgust for those kids, I'm sure. When this works, it is in on account of the pure animal aggression in the music, which I can't describe as well as the band member who wrote the liner notes did when he excused them for not printing the lyrics: "How can be written the hate, a visceral hate that has always been part of my being, on a piece of paper? Isn't it better to snarl, to hit, to beat blindly?" Fair enough. —b

S.O.A., address in here somewhere

Corrin "Plutonian Shores" CD: I remember really liking Corrin the first time

around, and I'm glad someone did a discography for them. Their older recording comes first on the CD, and it still sounds current four years later.

That's partly because once we discovered metal in '90's hardcore we had a hard time getting past it to try other things, but it's also because Corrin was not only cutting edge at the time but also made good music. What we have here is complex, well-recorded, dramatic metal/hardcore, not at all trapped by the tendency of hardcore bands from the American Northeast to center their music around moshable riffs and machismo. The riffs and guitar embellishments (including tactful solos, even) are interesting enough that their perpetual slow- to mid-tempo doesn't get dull, the shrieking vocals are well-executed, the songs are long and do a lot of exploring without getting boring. The samples are integrated well, with echoing background guitars to provide atmosphere and coherence, and the quiet metal/acoustic parts sound original, not requisite. At the best moments (and those quiet parts are most of them), they evoke windy churchyards at night, starry skies over silent hilltops, mortal terror in darkness. They even do a Cro-mags cover near the end, revealing their own versatility (and the universality of the Cro-Mags) by making it sound like a good modern '90's hardcore song. —b

Infidel, P.O. Box 1160, Vineyard Haven, MA 02568

Cracked Cop Skulls "Why Pussyfoot When You Can Kill?" 7": Poor C.C.S., they thought this recording was going to come out on a Japanese LP compilation that didn't work out. Poor us, it's not very good, and it came out in the Western hemisphere. The vocals are the main drawback, if they had any energy this would probably be OK, but they don't. It sounds like the vocalist has doubled all his tracks, but he's just yelling in an absolutely uninspired, emotionless way, so it makes it worse if anything. The music is just simple, almost-fast old-fashioned British hardcore punk, the bass has a nice fuzzy distorted sound, but it can't rescue me from the boredom inflicted by the monotonous vocals. The lyrics aren't terrible, they touch on some things I care about too (the way everyone has forgotten the threat of the atomic bomb, for example), but... —b

S.O.A., address elsewhere within

Dawnbreed "Luxus" 7": You know, until the very end of the first side, when the singer is still singing but I can ignore him because the band is doing something awesome (striking heavy chords alternated with fast bursts of high, discordant noise), I liked this whenever the singer wasn't singing and hated it when he was. He's singing with distortion on his vocals, which I hate, and his delivery sounds so deliberately preten-

tious, so rock'n'roll sardonic, ugh. The band does some indie rock jangly stuff when he's singing that bugs me (though it does have some of the nervous energy of old rock and roll music), but when he stops in the middle of

Damad "Centric" 7": Dear Inside Front reader, did I ever tell you about the only time I saw Damad play? I'd been looking forward to it for months, and we were playing with them in their hometown of Savannah, Georgia. I was going through a pretty hard time in my life (a different hard time—this is over two years ago), and when my band was playing I broke my nose (no one knows exactly how) pretty badly. I was pouring blood everywhere and it was pretty clear I had to go to the hospital, but I stayed behind to watch one Damad song. They played "Head, Heart, Hell" off the "In Our Time" record, my favorite song by them, and a film projector cast a patient's-eye view of an operating table on the wall behind them, evoking the horror of the very place I was about to go. The song on the first side of this 7" expresses that terror and fear and disgust that the atmosphere of the hospital engenders, that desperate feeling that your body is becoming a monster, spinning out of your control and into the hands of the anonymous masked faces around you. Appropriately the song begins and ends with a sample of an operating table disaster (a patient who caught fire and exploded when his stomach was sawed open), that, the first time around, sets the stage for the band to drag us under with a rhythmic expectation-defying riff. Then for a full four verses a single high, broken, shrieking note behind Victoria's guttural, bitterly ironic roars ("Precaution solved problem... precaution solved problem"), and back into the throbbing hammer-and-anvil "chorus," if it is such. The bass is grisly in its rumbling distortion, the guitars sound like hungry beasts, the drum production is perfect and everything sounds as huge and dirty and fearsome as an enormous machine grinding towards our fragile lives and homes—as indeed, machines of all kinds are, right now. In these songs Victoria makes little use of the monastic chants and singing she has embellished their songs with before, adding them only occasionally in the distant background for texture. The song on the second side starts with a little less power, with a speaking part over a noisy guitar line that climbs edgily up the octaves, but when the song proper hits, it is as anthemic and apocalyptic as anything Damad or any other band has ever done, with a simple chunky guitar riff that beats out like ringing knocks on death's very door. This part of the song is punctuated by a mad dervish dance, unbelievable as only Damad can play them, before repeating again, and it really does sound as if the world will come down around our ears. Both songs begin and end in the same cacophony of media noise that life in the late 20th Century has imprinted in all of our minds, and the lyrics match the music in power, especially to the second song: "with a third eye nailed open to what comes at any cost... war on third from the sun has all but yet begun. Expect a miracle." —b

Uh, this was released by Clean Plate and Passive Fist, but amazingly I can read neither address on the packaging... so, write to Damad themselves at 121 E. 63 Street, Savannah, GA 31405. They're good people, I'm sure you can trust them to respond.

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that song, they do something crazy with a slide guitar that sounds really weird and spacey, and every once and a while they punctuate his pauses with a heavy groove this that works well too. The song on the other side is, for the most part, even more jangly and unbearable for me; it has a break in the middle with some edgy melodic stuff on the barely distorted, messy guitars, that ends with just a powerful bass drum going (like in a rave song?), that's pretty good, but I couldn't get into it otherwise. These guys are definitely innovating, fucking around, taking risks, but they're not doing anything for me, at least, yet—their atmosphere of pretension and irony gets in the way. And, hey Dawnbreed, where the fuck are the lyrics? Or do you not care about that communication stuff? —b

Stickfigure, P.O. 55462, Atlanta, GA 30308

Dead Eyes Under "Cursed Be the Deceiver" 10": This is an example of the new generation of American east coast hardcore bands following in the footsteps of bands like Overcast, who took the metal/hardcore thing to its logical extreme at the end of the '90's. Here we find a lot of the same conventions and aesthetics that characterized Overcast on their last record (a heavy, thick mix, a proliferation of slow- to mid-tempo moshy riffs and drumbeats, "scary" samples on the theme of death and terror, a willingness to occasionally play guitar leads), plus a few details brought in from other influences (occasional Napalm Death deep vocals, for example). Like their predecessors, they have occasional moments of beauty and brilliance: there's a great moment in the last song on the first side where the lead guitar climbs higher and higher, finally flailing out into the void with a divebomb as the mosh part crashes back in. They slow the tempo down quite effectively in a song on the second side, too, and then add a

pipe organ, which is courageous and works fine—I'd love to hear more of that, in fact. If their singer was able to express a bit more emotion with his voice, beyond just sounding "evil" and fearsome, that would help propel D.E.U. to the level of making moving music rather than just rocking music. The band has the necessary skill and tightness, they seem to be on the edge of learning to construct tightly written songs, and the singer has decent vocal control and technique. But the emotional range here is just too limited right now, they need to put a more human face on their music, if that makes any sense. Just being scary and metal by itself is not enough; unless people can associate themselves with your music in some way, they won't be frightened by the scary stuff in it. —b

+/-, address nearby

Detestation CD: The Detestation LP and various EP tracks all on one CD from the now-defunct Profane Existence. I don't want to compare this to Nausea, since it might seem like a knee-jerk reaction (Detestation being another crust band with a female singer and all), but unfortunately I have no choice. I really loved Nausea, I thought what they did was fucking incredible, and my guess is that Detestation feel the same way... feel the same way so strongly that they're trying to carry on the Nausea torch by doing exactly what Nausea did. But, as so few bands realize, the only way to carry the torch for an innovative band is to continue innovating where they left off, and while Detestation has the energy to keep up, the innovation is what's miss-

ing here. That's why crust is fucking dead, in my opinion, by the way: it got too easy to just do the same thing over and over and fucking over. Anyway! Yes, they play fast, simple, raw hardcore punk, like Nausea in their simpler and more straightforward moments, less metal drama than Nausea though (the beginning of the last LP track is one of the only moments of this); their singer sounds a whole lot like Nausea's Amy, too, with her slightly nasal, attitude-filled vocals. The recording is just fine for what they're doing, perhaps the drums could be a little louder/clearer during the faster parts, but it doesn't matter, music like this can work pretty well without a good recording anyway and this one's fine. The lyrics are good, they're very specific and critical and at least show that Detestation are sincere. Here are some of the better moments: "daily life is a battle with forces that conspire to turn life into a long bleak stretch of unfulfilled desire" "A really smart guy once said to me 'why do you always fight? When are you going to grow up and start to do what's right?' Those eighteen words of wisdom that filled my ninth grade head made me decide right then and there that I'd fight till I was dead!" —b

Profane Existence, P.O. Box 8722, Minneapolis, MN 55408

December "Praying, Hoping, Nothing" CD: It must be a Pantera side project band. Hmm...its got the full production, the anguished dude screaming gutturally, the metal-as-all-git-out riffastic guitar attack, and then...a higher pitched voice screaming too. Nope, it couldn't be them...Phil Anselmo never hits the high notes. Really though, this does strike me as being Pantera influenced. Lyrically, a bit vague, with lyrics blurry on the page and a bit hard to read, with topics which seem to address social human issues tying into religious references to sin and heaven, etc. I would have liked the lyrics to be printed in a way which was easier to read. As it is, they run from line into line, with no discernible breaks. Overall, the layout / lyrics are not where these guys put their money or time. The production here is really good, and metal heads should flock to this, but for words and ideas I'd go elsewhere. JUG

Negative Attention Records; 2905 NE 190 St #302; Aventura FL 33180; USA

Diavolo Rosso "Groove Down to the Riotrock" 7": Punk rock from a label I am getting very inter-

ested in. This is another thick vinyl release, and this one has the best layout I have seen yet: a really well done combination of Crass-like politics with well scanned photos and a cut and paste feel throughout, though it looks totally pro. The centerfold is a collage, which earns punk points. The music is doomy and gloomy tuned down fast grindy punk (how's that for a description!) which breaks down further into dirge parts (a la Cathedral, you metal heads). Lyrically it is standoffish punk, written and sung half in German and the rest in English, with lyrics printed for all tracks. The back inside cover of the multiple page cardstock insert says it all "Thanx to those who deserve it...The rest of you out there: !!!FUCK OFF!!!" Hmm...I am just a reviewer, and hadn't done anything for the band before this record came out, so I guess that message applies to me! Allright then you jerks...fuck you too! Yeah! Fuck off you fucking fucks! Fuck you twice! Three fucking times! Fuck you! Fuck you! Fuck you!!! !!!FUCK YOU!!!" Whew...that's the spirit...that was pretty fuckin' punk. Ok: write/email this label and order whatever you can so you can get a discount on shipping from Europe (if you live in the States, that is). I like this, and get the feeling that whoever is behind its release is serious about what they are doing. JUG

Bad Influence Records c/o Stefan Fuchs; Ludwig-Thoma-Str. 14; 93051 Regensburg; Germany; stefanfuch@metronet.de

Disturbio Menor "Heridas Abiertas" 7": During the slower intro, the weak distortion of the guitar sound and the imperfect drum production bothered

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me a bit, but once the vocals came in and the music doubled in tempo I was all set. The second song is dressed up with moments of hypnotic, melodic drama that work even better next to the simple, old-fashioned straight ahead hardcore that comprises the rest of the music, that might be the high point for me. Their mosh-part rhythms work less well than the rest of this, I think, thanks to the production, which can't offer the force that would flatter them there; but their fast stuff sounds great to these ears, as do all the other things they try (and it's wonderful that they don't limit themselves to only two approaches). The singer does help carry the day—in the first song on the second side he sings with melody over the fast punk music, reminding me a little of Kricka Situace, which is great—and he always has the energy he needs, yelling, talking, or singing, to keep my attention. The lyrics are excellent, it's awesome to get a Chilean perspective on imperialism, capitalist "progress" in the third world, and Christianity, and they're printed in English too so I can check my poor Spanish. —b
Sin Fronteras, P.O. Box 8004, Minneapolis, MN 55408

Eagle Bravo "8 Three Dimension Full Stereo Songs" 12": There have been bands experimenting with in post-Fugazi school of emo/rock/whatever in North Carolina for a while now (Hellbender, for example) and Eagle Bravo came out of that tradition. I missed them while they were around, but to their credit, they've left behind a record of songs in this genre that don't sound to me like anybody else's. I think Fugazi wanted to encourage creativity and exploration when they sort of broke off from the pack and started doing their thing, but so many bands have just imitated them that it's a relief to hear a band following their lead but not ending up in exactly the same place. The vocals are infrequent, punctuating long periods of nervous, impatient music: droning guitar riffs, intersecting with and diverging from bass melodies and high guitar leads, pausing for discordant guitar noises, adding strange tunes and noisy textures, changing over to more traditional emo/rock riffs sometimes, and then changing back. They have the same mix that a lot of the lower budget bands of this style go for, more middle than treble or bass. The vocalist has a sort of torn up yelling style, it's not too sharp or abrasive, but sometimes I still can't understand a word he says, even with the lyric sheet. The lyrics are generally disgruntled, abstract enough that I can't always trace the stories he's talking about, but I can get a general feel for the personal and social conflicts he so obliquely describes. It's a one-sided twelve inch, by the way. Maybe it's not too space- or vinyl-efficient, but it's kind of cool to run my hand over a blank side of a record, expecting grooves and not feeling them. —b

Gridsector, P.O. Box 172, Chapel Hill, NC 27514

Elison "Fall" 10": It was bound to happen: a European band with a singer who calls himself "Mosh." I was afraid that I wasn't going to like this any more than the last record I reviewed from this label, and the bit-mapped-looking logo on the cover wasn't encouraging, but hey, this is quite good! It's the recording that makes the difference, partly. This just sounds so thick and ugly and powerful... at some points, they're just playing straight ahead riffs, that produced in the '80's hardcore way would sound like rehash shit, but mixed and produced like a heavy '90's hardcore record, those parts sound great. I feel as though there's a layer of vicious noise across the top of this whole record, kicking and stabbing at me the whole time I'm listening to it,

Earthmover "Death Carved in Every Word" CD: Another band that kept showing promise, finally did something really good, and broke up. They finally managed to get a really good recording in their home studio (that's more d.i.y. than you can say for almost any other band—!) for this, they finally managed to get a few really well-written songs, and of course right after they call it quits. The record opens with a busy tom intro, over hanging open guitar chords and notes. The first song is the real prize, it stands head and shoulders above the others with its blasts of double bass and intricate structures. The others are a little less perfectly crafted. There's a good mix of old-fashioned fast hardcore beats and slower chunky "dance" parts in the writing. Some of the e-chunk riffs (like the one from the third song) achieve the catchiness necessary for such riffs to matter, and the guitarists know how to doodle with harmonics and similar noises. The drumming is all good, original enough to help protect Earthmover from getting lost in the legions of moshcore bands always plaguing this subgenre. There's an haunting acoustic intro to the eighth track, which is carried off well enough; that song also features a weird e-chunk riff that seems to turn around under you by suddenly leaving out one chunk. At its best, Lenny's voice can be a bit reminiscent of the guy from Ringworm; at its worst (some of the speaking to shrieking parts, for example), it sounds like he's having a little trouble summoning what he needs to really let loose. That's rare, however, and for the most part his voice is one of the things that sets Earthmover apart as having a distinctive sound. The lyrics are simple and straightforward and deal largely with questions of betrayal and conflict with others. The packaging is lovely, each song is accompanied by a sketch and the insert paper itself is thick and a gorgeous color besides. —b

+/- records, P.O. Box 7096, Ann Arbor, MI 48107

awesome. Of course a good recording is *not* what it takes to make a good record, the band is definitely doing their job right too: their music isn't as traditional as I made it sound, they incorporate a lot more noise and chaos, rhythms that really fucking pound, transitions that all work great, songs that never let up, firing from both barrels. Their singer has a good, strong screaming voice, it has the same sharp, distorted sound as the rest of the recording, and it works really well all together. Yes, this is a good, ugly, adrenaline-pumping, sandblaster of a record. The lyrics are the only part that could use

much improvement, but when they begin the second to last song with tea-kettle-squeal feedback over tom rhythms, that's the last thing I'm thinking about. In fact, I think this record just gets more intense and innovative the longer I listen to it. And there's a band on their thanks list called "Gun Attack Yards From Home." —b

Fat For Life records, address below
Empire State Games "7": The problem is that I don't like a single band that plays this style: the jingly, soft pop rock music, the abstract lyrics about relationships, the artsy packaging that says nothing at all (yeah, how fucking postmodern), the pair of two-minute songs on one 7" and nothing more (hey, how Revelation!)... so I guess I'm not qualified to review this. The other problem is that I don't think anyone who reviews, has reviewed, or ever will review for Inside Front likes this kind of music. Sure, some of us like some soft music, some love songs, some emo stuff, whatever, but not pop drivel like this disguised as emo music. And the only thing I can think of that makes all that OK is that I doubt very many of our readers like said genre either. So sorry, E.S.G., that nobody here can give you the sort of well-reasoned, in-depth review that you might think you deserve, but I don't think we're your target market anyway. —b
Makoto, P.O. Box 50403, Kalamazoo, MI 49005

Endstand "CD": I liked this from the start on the merit of the lyrical content alone. But we'll get to that in a minute as there is more going on than just lyrics. Vocally, think of the harsh attack of Negative Approach: gurrutal, but higher pitched at the same time. At some points, he reminds me a bit of Jake Converge. Musically, creative and interesting...not following any one style, but overall solidly hardcore and guitar riff driven. The guitars aren't too heavy at all times, just coming in for the occasional punch, but Endstand don't need to rely on a heavy sound to make their record interesting. Let's talk lyrics for a minute. The first lines caught my attention...from the song "Freedom": *do you really think / I should stop signing politics and just sing about fighting / and how life is hard / well I surely won't stop this / cause I have a freedom / freedom to voice my opinion / and I'm going to use it.* Then the next song contains a line which always makes me smile, no matter how many times I see it, and no matter how much credit is really due to the Amebix and to those who came before...from the song "Denial": *I refuse to take a part / need no gods or masters / just a mind of my own.* I know, you critical psychopaths, how can I praise them for their use of the Amebix lyric when the very same line contains a rallying cry to be original? Well...ummm...uh...shut up, jerks. Moving on, there are songs on here about uniting behind political causes and destroying fascism. A good EP, and it has six songs at 15:15. Really nice packaging too: a cardboard case with an attached plastic matte see-thru tray for the CD, and a little pocket inside the front cover for the lyric book. Creative and groovy, all you hardcore

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Inside Front reader dudes and dude-ettes. JUG

Impression Records; Erich-Muehsam-Str. 35; 09112 Chemnitz; GERMANY
Enemy of the Species "Last Human Family" 12": Unpolished, political, apocalyptic d.i.y. hardcore—apparently from the fucking U.S. of A., for once! Wow! I'd give a lot to see more of that. The riffs show some metal influence, but the playing and songwriting and recording are all quite punk, and there are no solos or anything. They don't just play straight hardcore punk all the way through, though, they're not that kind of band: they dress up their music with plenty of less predictable stuff, slow sludgy dragging intros, sudden transitions, etc. They occasionally use shouted group vocals, which are a surprising contrast to the throaty screaming lead vocals—fortunately the backing vocals sound more like something from an early D.R.I. record than from a Youth of Today record (i.e. they're not overplayed/clichéd/boring). The lyrics paint a picture of industrial destruction, ignorance, apathy, middle class nightmares in a plastic paradise gone rotten to the core, to which they oppose small sparks of optimism and open-mindedness. Over all, it's pretty rough stuff, but it's not so bad, and we need this band more in the U.S.A. right now than anywhere else. They put a big smile on my face by putting an umlaut over the "o" in their label logo, too. —b

Army of Headless Clones, 531 Main Street, #1513, NYC, NY 10044

Equation of State "Exploded View" CD:

More sincere, political hardcore from Canada. This particular CD is pretty rough hewn, thanks primarily to the muffled mix and low vocal levels. It doesn't sound like what they're doing is without validity, it's just a little harder for me to make out than it could be. The music itself is a little rough, too, generally midtempo blurry guitar riffs, slightly jagged transitions, not-too-practiced screaming, a generous helping of noise and chaos mixed into everything. Their songs are not without interest, and they have a pretensions, personable feel to them, but E. of S. isn't yet poised to transform hardcore music. Still, don't get me wrong: I think we can use a lot more sincere, messy records in hardcore, and a lot fewer slick, would-be commercial moshable metal records. I hope Equation of State thrive and prosper, and smooth over the wrinkles of their music as they go. Their lyrics (which touch on a variety of personal/political issues, all with subtlety and awareness, and occasional catchiness: "I did not anticipate this opposition, they're eating broken glass and calling it tradition.") and the way they've included a piece of personal writing from each band member also recommend them, in my book. —b

Subprofit, P.O. Box 34029, Scotia Square R.P.O. Halifax, N.S., B3J 3S1 Canada

Facedown "Beyond All Horizons" CD: This is quite a polished work, musical and otherwise. The recording and playing are all first rate, the songwriting is tighter than, say, the Spineless CD I just reviewed, there are no real flaws to speak of here, and some tricks and flourishes that only confident, skilled bands would attempt. They even do the '80's thing at the end of the first song where the solo comes in behind the singing at the end of the song, haven't heard that in a while... they do it confidently and smoothly too, although I just can't get over what an old-fashioned thing to do that is! With the exception that I'm about to discuss, the music on here can be identified as coming from the Belgian hardcore scene by the chunky parts, the medium to fast tempo, the occasional metal riffs, and most of all those trademark screaming metal vocals (they're punctuated by a fair number of speaking parts too).

Not that this record couldn't possibly have been recorded elsewhere, but there are some really Belgian parts on here, no one could deny that. And there are two elevator-music pop love songs on here, they carry them off with as much assurance as their screaming metallic hardcore, but god I can't help but fucking hate them! They're not just pop love songs, they're fucking elevator music pop songs, and that's more than I can handle. I guess it's great that they're fighting assumptions of what should be on a hardcore record, I just wish they could have done it with reggae or jazz or some other

style with a little more substance to it (that should prove to be a controversial statement!). They do a techno song at the very end of the record, which works better for me. All together, I have to grant that their music is extremely polished and well-done; but for whatever reason, this isn't a record that's going to stick with me and change my life, it's just lacking that certain something, though I can't pin down what it is. The introductory essay extolling the virtues of open-mindedness is great to see, and they write eloquently enough about the other important subjects they address in the lyrics (rape, animal exploitation, freedom...)—so I'm quite glad they're around, even if they aren't deeply affecting me with their music. —b

Genet records, address below

Fall Silent "Superstructure" CD: My friend had told me that this CD was, for him, what Coalesce would be if their music expressed any human emotion, and I'd wanted to agree, in part so that this review would be easier, but there's a lot more than that going on. Fall Silent has always done the Coalesce parts (since before they were Coalesce parts), the repeating grooves in the low end, but (although the guitars stay in the low end for pretty much the whole record) there's a lot more here musically than repeating grooves and strange timing: there are plenty of fast parts, blastbeats, even, disorienting guitar chunk patterns and occasional droning open chords too. Levi's vocals are what really set this apart, of course, he has a really high screaming style that is unique in delivery and passion alike. His lyrics are

right on, too, touching on all the subjects I'm thinking about: the hypocrisy of mainstream (and countercultural) life, the work/slavery problem, trying to find real meaning in life and cling to it, the slow-motion apocalypse we're all bringing on ourselves (referred to here as "the Great White Death" when it is creeping up, and "The Day of the Locust" when it strikes)... and here's a prizewinner of a funny line: "Why has Nevada been Californicated?" The production and playing are unbelievably polished, this really is a masterpiece in those regards, and as a full length it has a much longer attention span (it doesn't wander or get bored with itself) than their first 12" did. Even their little break (a Journey cover?) is so much better executed this time around (compared to the gimmick cover on the last record, which got old fast) that I actually enjoy listening to it (and I do not like Journey); it rocks in the way that the best Van Halen songs rock, and it turns out Levi is actually a good singer now, as well as screamer. Plus, the production is so much better than Journey ever got it's ridiculous. More notes: sometimes they mess with scratching (yes, hip hop scratching), not to much effect yet, but I doubt there's anything this band can't do if they try. *Apocalypse Now* samples abound. Levi's message to all of us (decrying mediocrity, demanding that we all offer our efforts to replace it with creative projects of our own, and emphasizing that this record is proof that top quality work can be done d.i.y.) in the liner notes comes off really sincere too. —b

Good Clean Fun "Who Shares Wins" 7"; Hey, this is an awesome record! The cover is a parody of the Path of Least Resistance CD cover, featuring stuffed animals dressed up in the same bandannas and similar wannabe suburban tough guy apparel that those Syracuse nerds wore on the cover of that record... the difference being that the stuffed animals look more threatening! And on the back, there's a photo of a guy getting smiley faces tattooed on his hands. After the genius of the cover, I didn't dare hope that the music would be good too... but man, was I pleasantly surprised! The music is fast, filled with the adrenaline that made bands work in the late '80's, and the lead vocals (yelled, old NYC/Washington DC style) are filled with exactly the fervor they need to be great! Even the crew back-up vocals are hilarious and work musically, too. The lyrics are absolutely right on, too—they're written with some playfulness but address some really important issues (there's a really moving anthem against homophobia, and an all-around emphasis on being positive and supportive that comes off as much more sincere than Youth of Today or Gorilla Biscuits ever fucking did). I have to share some lyrics with you: "if you've got two kidneys, you have one to spare, because the people who win are the people who share!" "I love Ani and Amy and Emily, I hope every lesbian learns to play guitar" (that one is sarcastic, of course) "you swore you'd keep the edge to eternity, but now you're pledging to a fraternity! They even follow Crucial Youth's code ("if you curse, you're the worst, for you there is no hope... if you curse, you're the worst, wash your mouth out with... soap!") and, when quoting Minor Threat, say "having intercourse" instead of "fucking." And at the end of one song, they shout "STOP!"!!!! Yeah!! —b
Phyte, P.O. Box 14228, Santa Barbara, CA 93107

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Revolutionary Power Tools, P.O. Box 15051, Reno, NV 89507

Forced Into "Profit Not People" CD: Wow, this has the drama that it needs to work. It's not as fast as you'd think it would be (which is too bad, I think!), but it's still intense, animated, and though the riffs are simple enough they sound tense and rugged and keep you right there with the band. The singer has a great high shrieking voice and the rough mix flatters everything. The songwriting contains just enough unpredictable parts (the echoing guitar line in the third song, for example) to rescue this from being generic (good!) and the band sound like they're really letting loose. Lyrics touch on feeling disconnected from the real life suffering shown on the TV news, smashing racist thugs with violence ("with an open mind we'll crush everything you stand for [?!], we won't back down again, this time you're the prey"), sexual abuse and incest... there's a Malcolm X sample ("we're nonviolent with people who are nonviolent with us"), and one boy who plays guitar is wearing a shirt that reads "feminist" in one of the pictures, I think that's cool. So all in all, quite good, though I wonder if they really live up to their occasionally violent rhetoric. —b
Bridge, Box 1903, S-581 18 Linköping, Sweden

Freashow "The Earth Speech" 7": I like this one. Really thick black vinyl, unlike the crap we are used to seeing here in the States now. Recorded in 1995 according to the insert, but just now making it to my desk. I know the Seattle post office is notoriously slow around my neighborhood, but four years? No wonder my phone service keeps getting shut off when I think I am paying my bills. Four songs here, making up a themed record overall. Very melodic, towards the "emo" side of things at times but continually driving (sort of like Government Issue now that I think about it), with a lower pitched vocalist/singer who sings about (in order of the songs): destroying the earth for the sake of profit; patriotism and the subsequent blinding of the masses to real human lives (this coming in a song called "Proud Pedantry" so they gets vocabulary points there for sure); activism —vs— passivity (a song which raises my eyebrow for the line "let's use our ideals and put aside passions"...I would suggest that without our passions, our ideals are weak or nonexistent. Passions fuel activism and intensify it a thousandfold); and finally religion...this last song winning the "Lyric of the Hour" award for the line "let's burn the churches / all of them on fire". Hooray! I second the motion. Just make sure that there is no one inside other than Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior when you start your barbecue. Save me a roasted leg...though the barbecue sauce would probably drip right through the holes in his feet. Anyway... JUG

\$5 ppd; Daniel Ferrero; P.O. Box 506; 29640 Fuengirola; SPAIN

Good Clean Fun "Shopping For a Crew" 7": Wonderful, brilliant, and totally funny. As creative and timely as Crucial Youth was in the 80's when they came out as the "ultimate" straight edge band to mock the slew of cookie cutter boring as fuck edge bands at the time, Good Clean Fun pokes fun and satirically addresses crew mentalities, vegan revolutions, kickboxing, and eating too much sugar. You need to see and hear this record, if only to balance out the serious approach so many other bands take today. The packaging is really good too...it is done up like a box of cereal, with the

"Nutrition Facts" on the back adapted to band related facts. I actually don't even want to spoil it for you by quoting lyrics or telling you about the packaging in exquisite detail. What I will say is that if you are critical of hardcore today, as it relates to any or all of the above issues, that this record will at least arm you with a smile rooted in criticism, which is often the most potent weapon you can have. I wish more bands would or could take a step back and laugh at themselves and at this "scene" every once in a while. The result would be a freshness and vitality not seen or felt in the genre for years. What I do want you to know about this record is that the comedy/criticism is really creative, and that the music itself - with its '88 style singalongs and other similar facets, is pretty good. Worth your \$3 for sure. JUG

Underestimated Records; P.O. Box 13274; Chicago IL 60613

Griver "2 Songs" 7": Well-played, tightly-written, textured emo/punk music. The first song moves at a quick pace, never really changing tempo but maintaining energy by leaning harder on the intensity lever and then pulling back off it (the traditional way to do that being to alternate between muted and open chords, and yes, they do that here). The vocals are all torn high screaming, which I prefer to the somewhat melodramatic speaking vocals (another emo inevitable, I guess) that go with the acoustic part at the beginning of the song on the second side. Yeah, the second song uses more dynamics, going back and forth between the lighter sad, messy melodies and more distorted sad messy melodies on the guitars, and using more variety in the vocals (going back and forth between, you guessed it, the lighter sad, messy melodies and the more painful sad, messy screaming), but I like the first song more. It also has better lyrics, in my opinion—at this point it's very difficult to make emo lyrics about relationship difficulties (which comprise the second song) original enough to seem real, no matter how sincere they might be. The lyrics to the first song have more to offer, to me at least: "feel the radar. This constant drone is home. This is all service, no product." —b

Point the Blame, 10738 Millen, Montreal, PQ, Canada H2C 2E6

Groundzero "Seldom Does Hope Exhaust Despair" CD: Begins with feedback and cymbal noise over a fearsome, unintelligible sample, then they shout the name of the first song ("fallen angel") and the drums come in, playing that kickboxer's rhythm

that pegs these guys as a band from the northeastern USA. Yeah, I can see a bunch of young men hitting each other to this, half-naked, fantasizing about how tough they are... I suppose that's not necessarily the fault of the band, they may want to express more than just machismo even though they draw on a musical tradition associated so closely with that. The acoustic parts accompanied by morbid speaking parts (and, occasionally, singing parts) bolster that theory; I think these guys really want to make subtle and emotional music, despite the proliferation of chunky, midtempo tough-guy screaming dance parts throughout their songs. I don't feel like they've quite got the finesse for it yet, you can feel them pushing to be expressive in their own right but they're not quite there yet. In the meantime they do a fairly complex take on the metal/moshcore genre, songs about pain and suffering and feeling alienated from peers, family, society, decent recording and mix, dynam-

His Hero Is Gone "7": Five H.H.I.G. dervish dances/dirges, recorded between their two full lengths, plus a Jerry's Kids cover that sounds just like their own compositions here. If this was a mediocre or decent record, I could tell you about the unusual mix (how it's all treble and bass and somehow works wonders), about the short song length, the transitions between punk beats and blastbeats and slow, pounding beats, the way they take old punk music traditions and make them brand new by adding original twists. But it's not a decent record, it's a H.H.I.G. record, so I'm not thinking about all that technical stuff when it's playing. I'm thinking about dungeons black as pitch, spiders crawling across faces, red dawns in savage, ravaged foreign lands. I'm wading waist deep through filthy water into bat caverns, lured and terrified by the unearthly music ahead, spitting out prayers through chattering teeth to a supreme being I neither believe in nor adore... I'm running, rifle in hand, through the killing fields of a thousand third world wars financed and orchestrated by the demons of American imperialism. I am lying sleepless among dead bodies in the tomb, voiceless with horror, wordless in the face of these blasted, bruising songs.

As a side note, I'm not sure but I think the band actually released this record as a collective—not on one of their labels, as a private capitalist project, but as a collective project for the benefit of the band as a group itself. That's fucking awesome, that's a precedent that should be set for all other punk bands. All too often, even with d.i.y. bands that release their records through band members, it's still one guy who puts all the money in and then gets all the profits, rather than the band working together and benefiting equally. There's no reason d.i.y. musicians can't share the role of "record label" between themselves the same way they book tours, etc., for everyone's sake, rather than for the profit of one individual. It's awesome to look at the back of the 7" sleeve, where the label logo "should" be, and see just a big, black space—a big fuck you to the individualist capitalist tradition of American hardcore. Yeah. —b
His Hero I.G. themselves: P.O. Box 820043, Memphis, TN 38182; in Europe, contact Coalition, address elsewhere in these reviews

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ics, etc., although their songs are going to be a little unwieldy until their abilities catch up to their ambitions in terms of how much drama and emotion they're able to get across. Anyway, it's good to see a band from this scene hoping to do more musically than just provide a soundtrack for little boys to prove their mettle. As a side note, the order of the songs seems to be different than it's listed on the back cover and in the lyric sheet..?—b
Seize, 55 Porter Avenue 5E, Naugatuck, CT 06770

Harvest "Transitions" CD: By the time I had managed to peel off all the plastic wrap and the little bar code sticker I was already having a hard time liking this. But the music, though slick, and slickly recorded, helps me stick with them. It's midtempo metallic chunky modern hardcore, with deep screaming vocals and the predictable metal mix, but it has guitar leads too, which helps keep it from being as boring as its contemporaries. When the chunky music all stops and the singer shouts in the pauses, I swear I've heard this before, but it's still well done at least. Sometimes their singer's inflections make him sound like a NYHC singer, which is a little

strange in context, but in general he carries off his job well. I don't really think the world needs another metallic danceable hardcore band to keep the genre running in place any longer than it already has, but if we had to have one (and it was inevitable, of course) I guess it might as well be Harvest. They do what they do with perfect finesse and competency, it just doesn't need doing that much, does it? If something new doesn't happen soon in hardcore music like this, I'm gonna fucking panic. The packaging is really slick, filled with photos of the string section rocking out, but it doesn't offer any more clues as to why they feel a burning need to do this. This is actually a compilation of previously released material, but the quality doesn't degenerate noticeably as we go back in time with them. Actually, I think I like the older material better, it has a bit more raw urgency perhaps? Or maybe this style of music was itself more vital in 1995? —b
Trustkill, 23 Farm Edge Lane, Tinton Falls, NJ 07724

Haywire "Mad Cow Disease" 7": Speedy, old-fashioned British punk here, with enough feeling in the shouted vocals to make it work (much better than the otherwise similar Cracked Cop Skulls 7" did, for example). The second song even ends with an old, old-fashioned punk reggae part, and the final song (the title track) has a verse reminiscent of the Exploited circa Troops of Tomorrow, their best record. All three band members sing, and the variety in their voices works nicely, although I'm ashamed to admit that thanks to my Yankee heritage I can't understand a word these limies are saying even when I read the fucking lyric sheet along with the record. [I remember when we first got to England after touring Europe, I'd never been there before I and I was absolutely unprepared for the experience of audiences shouting unintelligible insults continuously at us between songs, which I guess is what people in England do when they like a band..? I finally asked one crowd if they could understand us any better than we understood them, but I couldn't understand their answer. It was easier to communicate with people in fucking Finland! So listening to this record reminded me of those lovely days.] Anyway, thanks to the lyric sheet, I can tell you that the lyrics aren't bad at all, quite issue-specific in the case of the first and last of the four songs here, which is good for political punk like this. Besides the mad cow disease/veganism issue, they address environmental destruction, animal slaughter, and poverty/class issues. —b

Blind Destruction, Box 29, 82 Colston St., Bristol, BS1 5BB United Kingdom
Highscore "" 7": I'm sorry to say that I don't really like their music, because I agree completely with most of their political ideas. They have songs about working to change the disproportionate numbers of men and women in the

hardcore community, fighting fascists and other enemies of freedom, and why it doesn't make sense to simultaneously be involved in hardcore and be a career soldier in the army, and they've included essays by the band members (in German and English) expanding on these and other topics. So I wish I could be more excited about their version of the fast '80's generic hardcore thing (crew backup vocals, breakdowns, and all) but it just doesn't have anything to set it apart from the other faceless masses of bands in this genre. It doesn't lack energy, exactly, but it's just not catchy enough. Anyway, regardless, I'm glad they exist, even if I don't like them. They're spreading good ideas, and maybe one day they'll do something I like. —b
La Familia c/o Sebastian Stronzik, Soesterstr. 66, 48155 Muenster, Germany

Indecision "Most Precious Blood" CD: These guys/girls pump out tons of songs. This is their new CD here in my hands and I hear through the grapevine that they are going to go into the studio soon to record yet another

project of some kind. This record has a lot going for it, in ways which traditionally, many hardcore records do not. I get a ton of recordings to review which are pleasing to the ear but which do nothing for the brain, but here, Indecision has tried to bridge the gap between the two. The record sounds great (meaning 'well recorded', and almost too perfectly recorded at times - the final product is so polished that it has moments in which it loses its feeling, but do not get me wrong...this sounds excellent) and the thirteen (!) songs give a good idea for where Indecision is going musically and lyrically. For those who have not heard the band before, Indecision is a band which embodies a number of different styles/choices, but uses them all along with their own creative additions. Are you looking for fast hardcore? Chunky guitars? Sing alongs? Metal styled guitar work? Straight edge? Add to all of that creative and challenging lyrics, high pitched unique vocal sounds, innovative song structures and no songs about straight edge(!) and you get a refreshing style overall. This CD is themed towards a critique of religion, tradition, and culture - with highlights coming at Track 11 "Crucifix Escapist": "Having served my time in your paradise / of torture and despair / to play the harps of sin", and on the back cover of the lyric booklet, which is an essay about the focus of the band. It covers the idea that hardcore is immediate and vital to the band, because it is an extension of their lives, which are immediate and vital as well. Excellent. Here's a quote from the essay: "Life is fluid. Life is spontaneous. Life is not a procedure. Life is not a machine. Life is erratic and impulsive. Think about the spontaneity of emotion of life and love. The emotional release that is music. Music is our therapy." Ok, so sentence fragments are more difficult to read comprehensively than full sentences, but the content is there. Other points of note on this CD are a bold layout with photos of the band and religious graphics along with the superimposed slogan "tradition is the enemy"; and a guest appearance by Rob Fish from 108/Resurrection (which I mention here not to perpetuate any useless culture of personality, but rather because the guy has one of the best voices ever and he co-wrote the song which he performs on the CD with the band). Overall, a challenging CD, and one which I recommend finding. JUG

Exit/Wreckage, P.O. Box 263, New York NY 10012
Inflicted Spoon "Their Money or Your Life" CD: OK, I'd better put this on the table at the start: not only does this band have a ridiculous name, but it says "no war but the class war—no crack but the ass crack" on the back of their CD. Anyway, that said: some of the best bands of the early '80's were the British bands (like CRASS) who explicitly didn't care about music except as

Intensity "Wash Off the Lies" CD: Intensity's not afraid to go full speed ahead doing things that have been done a thousand times before. And in fact, they go all out to such an extent that rather than making merely generic music, they manage to fight their way through a fifteen year history of straightforward hardcore bands to make classics of their own! When I listen to this CD, I'm filled with the same excitement and raw energy that I once got from bands like Side By Side, no less. The vocalist has such personality it's like he's right here shouting to me, and I love the trebly, imperfect recording that emphasizes the hiss of the high hat. And the band just sound like they're going all fucking out, that's how they can not only get away with ending the first song with a crew chorus that goes "one step forward, two steps back" but actually make me thrilled that they dared to do that. The lyrics are all absolutely right on, addressing all the right issues from pornography to directing your frustration in productive ways against its roots in capitalism, and each song is accompanied by a further piece of writing, all of which are excellently written and manage to add to lyrics that are already thorough. This record stands head and shoulders above most of its colleagues in this issue's reviews. And after fifteen originals (in about twenty minutes), it ends with a Life's Blood cover! —b

Bad Taste, Stora Soderg. 38, 222 23 Lund, Sweden

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a vehicle for political ideas. Ironically, they ended up making great music anyway, because what they were doing was so honest and heartfelt. That's what's good about this band, too: the music doesn't seem to be too important to them, they play the same simple three-chord punk that people have for over twenty years (punctuated very rarely by a ska-ish part or a Dead Kennedys surf lead) as a soundtrack for their political ideas, and it works just fine. Their songs are actually catchy enough (if roughly performed) that,

plus their obvious sincerity, this isn't a bad CD. The lyrics (which examine a lot of issues in detail from a generally anarchist/activist perspective) are the central thing here, you have to be looking for political punk commentary to enjoy this, but it's definitely here—to a much greater degree than it has been in any crusty dis-band in the past decade. And the fact that they're trying so hard, that they care so much and still have their idealism intact, is itself inspiring. —b

Inflicted Spoon themselves (d.i.y.), P.O. Box 11362, Raleigh, NC 27604-0362

John Holmes "El Louso Suavo" CD: From what I gather, the people in this band are all weathered old British punk types, and for them to still be making music this current and relevant is a pretty amazing thing. As far as British hardcore stuff goes, this sits somewhere in the field of Hard to Swallow (fast parts, occasional weird time changes, some lead guitar lines and punchy rhythms... but not nearly as spastic or deranged) and Stalingrad (equally gritty and bitter, with some of the same merciless pulse in the slow parts, but more human vocals and a less supernatural atmosphere all around), though as you've gathered from my disclaimers it's a little more raw and straightforward. The music is tense, jumpy, ugly, skidding from one part to the next like a runaway truck with no driver and a payload of bricks. There are two vocalists, one with an old fashioned shouting voice ('80's punk like Antisect/etc.?) and the other with a more modern constricted, claustrophobic choking style. The all-around attitude is viciously depressed, full of bile, malice, sickbed regrets and resentment... one song starts with the most depressing sample I have ever heard, about growing older, losing your edge, your abilities, your mind. This probably doesn't sound like a really fun listen to you positive youth kids, and it's not; but I suspect it's meant not for you but for the older, more desperate, embittered ones who aren't quite yet ready to throw in the fucking towel. —b

Flat Earth, P.O. Box 169, Bradford, BD1 2UJ, United Kingdom

Judgment "Haunt in the Dark" 7": I don't know how the fuck this ended up in the review box, I think it was an accident, so I'm not going to go into much depth here... but anyway, if you like Motorhead, this Japanese band does everything that Motorhead did at their peak (Ace of fucking Spades!), only with a better recording and that infectious Japanese weirdness. The same incoherent rebel glory lyrics (they even gain something in this strange English), the same rocking high-octave riffs, the proud riff raff choruses, the rock/metal overstatement that can feel so good once you get used to it. Super fancy gatefold cover. Yeah, if you like Motorhead and Japanese punk, you've probably been waiting your whole life for this record. —b

H.G. Fact, 401 Hongo-M, 2-36-2 Yayoi-Cho, Nakano-Ku, Tokyo 164 Japan
Lanyard "Realms" 7": I was already to jab at this for having no lyric sheet when I realized that the reason there is none is because they don't have a vocalist!!! This is essentially a jazz styled quintet which plays as if they have a melodic singer waiting in the wings. The music itself didn't transport me to any new realms, but any band with two drummers, a guitarist, a bassist/theremin (what the fuck is a theremin!?) player and an alto saxophonist gets big originality points. Still, I wish there were more than two songs on this record so that I could have been swept away by it, no joke intended. As it was, it took me two songs to even get into it, and having to flip the record over halfway through just shook me out of whatever realm they were trying to create with their sax/bass jazz lines. Melodic and rarely catchy, but strong when the guitar kicked in to add heaviness to the mix. Side two is more creative, interwoven and dream-like than side one. A full length of side two styled songs would kick ass. It ranged from the distorted guitar backing up the other instruments, to quiet cymbal/sax lines which lead the piece out into silence. For my dollar I would find a copy of any Iceburn full length before I would touch this one, but maybe they have other longer releases out or in the works to check out and get into. JUG

One Percent Records; P.O. Box 141048; Mpls MN 55414 USA
Linsay "7": This is an older Linsay than the one I heard on the split 7" with the Cole Quintet earlier today, I suspect: a less complex one, a less accomplished one, a Linsay that is less prepared to take risks. The songs on that split hit me with non-stop intensity, into the red from beginning to end, while these sometimes work their way up there but spend more time trying to find the right buttons to push. Here their sound is a little less current: they change direction less frequently, play less complicated, more predictable riffs that depend more on guitar chunk, take longer to work their way through their intros and arrangements, incorporate less noise and variety into their German hardcore. Their singer's voice isn't quite as high and terrifying, either. Had I heard this first, I would have thought that they were a good band, but I don't think I would have been prepared for the sublime fury of their songs on the split. So, if you're interested in Linsay, go there first. —b

Per Koro, address elsewhere in these reviews
Loxiran "CD: Here's all Loxiran's stuff on one posthumous CD. You can definitely tell they're from the wave of later-'90's German hardcore that some (myself included) believe rescued hardcore from becoming predictable and passionless. Their songs have the characteristic chaos and surprising transitions of other Per Koro bands, and a similarly powerful recording (I think these bands are all recorded by the guy from Systral). But thanks to their singer's pleading voice, which he uses to do more than just scream over and over, their music has a more human face than many of their contemporaries in the crazy-shrieky-noisy world of German hardcore. That doesn't mean it's necessarily better, I think they lack the fury, the classic catchiness and amazing innovation that made Acme and Systral what they were/are, although their personality does help me enjoy them more than Aclys, for example. Their genuine interest in communicating is underlined by the fact that not

Ire "I Discern An Overtone Of Tragedy In Your Voice"

CD: When I first heard this, I was a little afraid it sounded too much like Bloodlet, since I'd been expecting something with quicker tempos, like the work on their 7". Now that I listen to it again, I'm blown away, I have no doubts or complaints. What Bloodlet was trying to do—create monstrous, desolate slow motion nightmares out of drastically down-tuned guitars, roaring vocals, and painfully dragged tempos—and failed to do, due to the decay of their artistic integrity and too much drug use—happens here, to such an extent that those of us who (misled by Bloodlet) doubted this equation could ever create anything really emotional are now regretting our words. These songs are genuinely eerie: the band is expect at creating atmosphere out of the broad spaces in their music (slower music has more space in it, you know... and when they drop out the guitars, leaving only the growly bass, there's enough space to fit whole empires of darkness), and they only use the most stomach-churning of minor chord scales. The first song begins something the same way His Hero Is Gone's "Monuments" record did: heavy distorted chords, then a pause for a mournful, lonely guitar crying into empty space, before the distortion/destruction return again, punctuated by those heartbreaking high notes—only, in Ire's case, with no more speed than the first time. They add the Slayer harmonies on the guitars at one point, the way Overcast loved to (on a groove in the second song that might bring Black Sabbath to mind if it was played at at least 78 r.p.m.). A little double bass and even a blastbeat (that somehow sounds as lugubrious as all the slow stuff) appear towards the end of the CD. There's an interesting tension in Ire, in that their lyrics and general motivations revolve around specific political issues (the prison-industrial complex and the images and misinformation spread by the mass media, for two examples), while their music is unmistakably introspective and abstract in its slow, painful spookiness. And just how slow is Ire, you ask? Well, this CD is a half hour long, and that's just four songs. —b

the Mountain Cooperative, address close at hand

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only are the lyrics to the songs of the album proper printed in both German and English, but the lyrics to the 7" songs (which are also included at the end here) are also printed on an extra insert, along with English explanations thereof. The two lengthy live tracks they've included sound good, too, and have at least as much wild intensity as their studio work. Lyrics deal with a lot of stuff from the "personal is political" standpoint, touching on apathy and "p.c. fascism," for example, without getting too defensive. —b

Per Koro, address near the beginning of the record reviews (under Aclys)

Malefaction "Man Grows Cold" CD: A couple days ago, I reviewed the Tet Offensive demo, and now I come across another great political Canadian grind band... I wonder if these kids all know each other, or what? Malefaction use samples to punctuate between one song and another, which is tired at this point, but the music between doesn't sound tired or heartless at all. The riffs are catchy enough to maintain my interest, the low and occasional higher roaring vocals sound impassioned enough, and the myriad tempo changes keep everything going well. Not the mix but the CD mastering is a little unclear, I think, but it doesn't really hurt them. The lyrics are much better than the samples, which don't seem to have anything to do with them; the first song is entitled "Real Beauty Cannot Be Photographed" and the second to last "An Entire Generation Destroyed." After the fifth song there is a snippet from a live recording in which the singer (of this or another band?) does the Iron Maiden thing of dividing the audience into two halves, which compete to shout "oh yeah" the loudest... what the fuck? And the CD ends with them shouting "fuck you everybody, goodnight!" and an explosion that is better recorded than anything before it has been. So my conclusion is that Malefaction are a good grindcore band, and if they continue to improve musically and they start to show a little more focus in the way they present their music to the world they could do a great record. Of course, maybe they enjoy being a little silly and unfocused... —b

Out of Enslavement, 484 River Road, St. Andrews, MB, R1A 3C2 Canada

Manner Farm "We' Is a Difficult Concept For Us" CD: Do you want the good news first or the bad news? Think about it for a minute, and let me know. Ok, times up, the bad news: rumor has it that Manner Farm are breaking up by the time you read this. The good news? Manner Farm is intelligent, thought provoking, ideologically revolutionary and fun to listen to. They will hate this review, as they are quite anti-ego, and would probably just rather I say "Manner Farm exists. They exist and play music." But, that is not to be, as I am in control of the keys now. Ha ha!!! Musically, think of these six songs as a cross between the starts stops and changes of a Propagandi with the fast three chord punk of Bad Religion. Vocally the same comparison can be made, with Ivan the singer talking/screaming and remaining relatively intelligible throughout. Lyrically fucking profound and directly political. Combine poetry and passion with politics and personal anguish and you get Manner Farm. From the song "Cardiacally Arrested" (about heirarchy between species): *Life is NOT your industry / Life is NOT your resource / No one is egalitarian who calls themselves 'master' / And there is no kind way to crack a whip.* And then from "Montreal" (about sexual roles/sexism/rape): *RAPE / that makes me want to cry / And every rubberneck, every billboard, every magazine, every tv screen, every office building, every mudflap, every dollar bill, every diet pill, every inch of skin, every kitchen, every suit and tie, every*

marriage vow, every clenched fist, every bit lip, every connection, every erection / cartoon neon flashes through my mind and the hornets sting my eyes / and I see snarling men everywhere / in alleys with knives. Need I say more? There is a full page essay for each of the six songs, and the ideas presented are clearly communicated, direct and intense. Class war, rich and poor, alive or dead, and on and on and on. Fuck! I don't even know where to start with it, as there is so much here. Live, they usually play for 40 minutes, of which 15-20 is talking, discourse with the audience. They are on tour right now throughout the USA, and I hope you get a chance to see them before they are gone forever. I love this band. JUG

no address given, but contact me and I will try to put you in touch with them: Greg Bennick/Manner Farm; 427 Eleventh Avenue East; Seattle WA 98102; USA; xjugglerx@aol.com

Manual Seven "The Shattering" 7": Their singer is great, the best I've heard on a Profane Existence record in years. He carries off the high inhuman shrieking thing with the very best of them. The band plays fast, sometimes messy and loose, but unpredictable in their songwriting: I keep expecting them to just play fast punk chords, and they'll throw in these sad, tragic-sounding guitar leads to keep me off balance. Good for them. Hey, they even hit me with a blastbeat at the end of one song! The last song is the best one, it has the most energy and the catchiest chorus. The recording is clear enough, but the production sounds somehow empty; I think the guitars lack the bass sound they need to make this heavy. With a thicker production it would work better, I think, but M.7 may just not care about that stuff. The packaging reminds me of Prank records stuff, like the His Hero Is Gone layouts (same font, for example) only the lyrics (generally dealing with the stress and misery of life in the capitalist economy... "another day another dollar") are harder to read over the image behind them. Too bad Profane called it quits just when they were starting to release records of current music rather than the old crust rehash. —b

Profane Existence, address elsewhere inside

Medulla Nocte "A Conversation Alone" CD:

This comes in with a definite hip hop feel, the heavy guitars and drums doing a metal groove thing and the singer shouting "step back with a vengeance..." The singer has good presence, that's going for him; he often does a sort of hip hop inflection with his voice, I'm not sure how much I like it (at this point it has some bad associations connected with it, Biohazard or something...) but he carries it off well enough. The production is good, powerful and overloaded, perhaps reminiscent of the most recent Slayer record. The band plays pretty simple stuff, pounding metal groove like I said, they don't manage to ever get boring though. There's enough energy here to hold your attention through, whether you like it or not. Hey, there are backing vocals (shouted chorus backups) sometimes too, they fit in just fine, even though this isn't Youth of Today by any means. When I first heard this band, it sounded like the guy from Oi Polloi singing for Slayer, and I was really excited about it, but I'm not getting that at all this time. You might like it, it's tough and powerful and filled with attitude, it just isn't expressing any of the emotions I'm feeling these days I guess. —b

Household Name, P.O. Box 12286, London, SW9 6FE, United Kingdom

Minion "7": For the most part, this is more straightforward than the really

Man Vs. Humanity ("Anti Imperialist Culture Sound")

7": It's awesome that there is so much cutting edge hardcore coming out in Germany that there are now labels besides Per Koro releasing these records. I have nothing against Per Koro, I'm just excited to see the hardcore scene there so vibrant and alive; I think their take on early the '90's American metal/hardcore genre is among the most progressive things to happen in hardcore in the latter half of this decade. Man Vs. Humanity benefits from obvious sincerity and seriousness (they're both politicized and emotional, at once), a good heavy, dirty recording, and a gorgeous layout (mixing a number of beautiful colors and textures, including silver, royal blue, and old parchment anatomical illustrations) on this 7". The best moments probably come in the song on the second side, in which a number of contrasting but complimentary parts (mosh, blastbeat, crazy/noisy guitar melody) follow in rapid succession, ending with an amazing finale as the singers hiss then scream the old adage (it sounds like Oscar Wilde, but I'm sure that's wrong) "truth is a lie told too many times." At first, the other songs didn't have quite the catchiness and emotional force that made this one stand out for me, but after I went back and listened to them again I liked them more too. There's still one sour note in a guitar lead in the second song on the first side, where they're trying to do Slayer harmonies, but that's all I can complain about. And I'm totally behind their assertion that radical subjectivity must be the foundation of liberation of any kind: "Perception is subjective. Bury the myth of objectivity, bury the myth of dualism... everyone constitutes her own environment. I see with my own eyes, I hear with my own ears, I think with my own mind. I am unique." —b

Paracelsius, which put out lots of the good records in here...

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crazy hardcore coming out of Germany right now, which surprised me a little

record this at the diy studio the

Earthmover guy runs, which is awesome, and they're all nice midwestern boys, after all. For the most part, this is energetic and sincere traditional hardcore (fast parts, mosh parts, simple riffs, no leads, screaming vocals, lyrics about liars, bad cops, and self improvement), though there are parts (a mosh part that incorporates snare drum rolls near the end of the first side, for example) that take the genre and try to help it forward. And it is fucking awesome when the second side begins with a full four measures of snare drum roll, that really grabbed me. This is a good, solid record, they do what they're trying to do well... now they need to pick up where Earthmover left off and keep this style of hardcore alive by bringing new ideas to it. They have they raw energy and excitement to pull it off. —b +/-, P.O. Box 7096, Ann Arbor, MI 48107

No Contest "Where do we go from here?" 7": This is one of those 7"s that uses up more than half of the first side for an intro before the vocals came in. It's not such a bad intro, pretty fast and simple, it just goes through a surprising number of changes before the singer finally joins in. He's got an old-fashioned yelling hardcore voice, reminiscent of Ray from Warzone, that doesn't go badly with this simplistic old hardcore stuff (lots of fast parts, feedback with the bass leading in the next part, a chunky part here and there like the old youth crew bands would do, a slower moshy chorus in one song..., and one solo like the old Agnostic Front would do). Song topics include betrayal, shit talking and how it's not a good thing, unity, and keeping the faith of rebellious youth. This doesn't sound as old and tired as it could, I don't see these guys as part of the new school wanna-be "old school" revival so much as I imagine them believing that style of hardcore never died. If you need another record in this genre, this might not be a bad choice, it's done well enough. The photos of them playing to kids with electroshock punk hairdos in Pist and C.O.C. shirts are fun, as is the cover photo of a kid hopping a fence. —b

The label is called Slaughterhouse records, but I'm not sure if this is their address, the band's, or both: 137 Morgan Pl., Kearny, NJ 07032

One Day Closer "Songs of Silence" CD: Nine songs from this Dutch old-fashioned speedy hardcore band. I'm not sure if they would describe themselves as "old-school" or not, this sounds a lot like the stuff that was coming out (especially from Europe) in the early '90's, which lots of fast parts and not particularly complicated mosh parts often involving tom drumming. Spawn, Unbroken, Undertow, Chokehold, and Mainstrike are all on the thanks list, and that should give you an idea of what's happening here musically too. The singer

Pressgang "Self destroyed" 7": This band reminds me a little of Hand to Mouth: a rough but capable band that goes back and forth between more abrasive screamy hardcore music and more melodic punk, with great political ideas and writing in their inserts, that probably will be too lazy to do the necessary work to spread their much-needed ideas to the rest of the hardcore scene. I hope not! The inside of the record cover features a nearly illegible essay about how punk rock is losing its soul to fashion and conformity... I'm sick of these essays, punk has been in that situation since its inception, and everyone who spends more than a year in the scene thinks they're the first one to figure it out. They go running around shouting that the sky is falling, but the truth is that punk has always had good and bad trends going back and forth in it. Concentrate on the good stuff and what you can do with it before you end up bitter and defeated. Anyway, the essay ends "one day a real rain will come to wash all the dumb off the streets," which is funny, and in the rest of the liner notes (which may have been written by another band member?) Pressgang seem a lot more self-aware about issues such as the loss of idealism in punk. In fact, this record is firmly in the top five for best lyrics this issue. The samples they use are fucking hilarious, I'll let you discover those for yourself, but I can't resist reprinting passages of their fucking awesome lyrics here:

"Brave chimp smashes transistor, makes him feel so strong, scared that its big brother will have his job in not too long"

"Spend your whole life publicly pulling your heartstrings, so downsidely you can't see up. We all have problems, you sell your problems: retail is just another job. The crowd screams and sobs, then go back to their dead end jobs, or down to the bar another feeling to buy... the artist excretes tasty saccharine treats that make the ladies faint and sigh, the masses arrive so eager to displace the emptiness that infests their lives..."

"Feelings, stupid feelings leave me wrecked on my bedroom floor, but that's not a problem of mine anymore, not since I've decided to join the robots."

"I've seen the vanguard of the new age, a new age for us all: freedom and equality and softer clubs for the weak and small... I've met the leaders in a world where no one leads, the opposition hangs from trees in a revolution fueled by record sleeves. Here is my Love and Rage, here is my gilded cage—here is my Crass t-shirt, I fucking quit!"

[The last lines are from their song "Revolted," about which the liner notes say: "...some things are more important than personal vendettas, right?" A lesson the whole anarchist underground needs to fucking learn, in the U.S., at least!] —b
Bloodlink in the USA, 4434 Ludlow St., Philadelphia, PA 19104 or scottb@martinet.com
Scene Police in Europe, DPM, Auf Dem Stephansberg 58, 53340 Meckenheim, Germany

because that seems to be the company they keep. The first song, though at one point they do stop and bend one guitar note up (exactly the same way Acme once did, yes indeed), is largely fast hardcore stuff with chunky hardcore riffs and everything. The vocalist sounds like he might be using a little distortion on his vocals, though they don't lack rage and energy. There's a part in the second song where they mix in some really beautiful melody for the second half of the song, without having to shift gears too much, and their screamer sings for a little while. The third song is slower, more modern and moshy, with grindcore-esque parts (deep growls and blastbeats) to punctuate it. The b side has three more songs that cover the same general territory, although one of them in comprised almost entirely of blastbeats, which surprised me a little. The insert artwork is whimsical, playful, it employs comic book images of gas-masked aliens, among other things. I've decided, after listening to this, this it is after all a very good record, it certainly has more energy and urgency than almost every record that came out in the U.S. this year; I guess I was just expecting a little more innovation, after the last record I reviewed from this label. —b

Paracelsius, address in the split 7" reviews Motorsaegenservice "Du Hast Gottes Sagen" CD: Dear god, this is one of those little 3" CDs I'm in love with, so of course I'm instantly inclined in its favor. And this is what the Toxic Bonkers CD should have been, a European grindcore record that out-Assucks Assuck! They have an incredibly heavy, bright recording, that's what does it, and their playing is tight and flawless. Their grindcore writing and performing have just enough surprises to keep ahead of being generic, too, which helps (an occasional flamboyant guitar slide here and there is all it takes to keep the traditional hyperspeed drums/deep growling vocals/heavy groove parts equation working). There are no lyrics included, nothing but fairly silly images of disembowelment, so this is just something you listen to for fun, but indeed it is fun! Especially for me, just putting the little 3" CD in the player makes it worth it. The last three (of eight) songs aren't as well recorded, and consequently don't work as well, but there's enough music here to provide for my needs. I'm not sure how much of it is just the cute little CD size, but I'm definitely glad to have this around. —b

S.O.A., address by the less-positively reviewed Toxic Bonkers CD

Next to Nothing "To Have Courage, But No Conscience" 7": I don't know if this band is doing what they're doing as a direct result of the stuff kids like Earthmover have been doing next to them in Detroit for the last few years, but I think of them as a part of the same current. Besides, they did

has a deep, repetitive screaming voice. Intensity from Sweden do some-

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thing similar, but somehow they have a raw energy that makes their music more interesting than this. There's nothing really missing here that I can put my finger on, there's just not enough here for me to get really thrilled. The fourth song has a breakdown part that's memorable enough to help it stick out, and similar things happen every once in a while in the others; I think the rest of the music just has too much in common with ground that has already been trodden to dust by other bands to really matter at this point. The lyrics too are not poetic enough to get away with dealing with the topics they touch on (inner searches, struggles, memories...) without again fading into the mass of other hardcore bands. It's hard with so many fucking bands making music to stand out and offer something everyone needs, but that's what you have to do to keep your hardcore vital, and One Day Closer is almost there. —b

Coalition, P.O. Box 243, 6500 AE Mijmegen, the Netherlands

Outlast "A Ramble in Passion" 7": The intro essay on the layout of this record is worth reprinting in its entirety. "In these standardized times, where basically nothing is surprising, passion is one of my last reliable feelings of what's right. To live out my desires and to not just let the days float by. In a society where the word obey is the most common one, there is not too much room for creativity. That is why this is our ramble of passion. One of my only passions. Music. And I wish it was more than just music in every mutation of this form. The same way it is in our safe little punkhardcore scene. 'Cause I strongly believe it is more than music here. Most of the other music is just a string pulling consumerism act, where they exploit your feelings and makemoney out of the human need of belonging to a group...I awake in sweat...longing to feel every feeling, just to taste life...to grasp a bit of it. So, I'm on a ramble for passion." Right on. The music throughout this record is relatively standard straightedge sounding late 80's hardcore with a smaller vocal sound than I expected. Lyrically the record addresses: cliques within hardcore; the pressure towards "adulthood" (just a note from me: than one of the most debilitating things in this genre is people referring to themselves as "kids" all the time...this *should* be music for adults, by adults...aren't we sophisticated and creative enough to accept that role? It doesn't mean "selling out" or being washed up...but rather just taking responsibility for yourself while staying 'young at heart'... which in itself is a societal construct! We should continue to be ALIVE at heart and responsible as well!!!!) The packaging is really polished and precise. Someone with computer access and skills had a hand in this...so it looks sharp. The best part for me is that essay piece though. I really hope they keep that idea in mind and follow this up with an LP in which their music and lyrics are as revolutionary as their ideology. JUG

Bridge Records; Box 1903; SE-581 18; Linköping; SWEDEN

Point of Few "7": This record surprised me... this band is like a younger Intensity: they're less polished, but they somehow manage to make the generic '80's hardcore thing work like a fucking charm, just by playing as hard as they can and not being afraid to be catchy. I never thought I'd like another fast, simple song with a chorus like "you should keep your distance... you should keep your promise..." but here I am, wanting to yell along with it (and, god forbid, even point two fingers in the air!). One thing they have going for them that none of the '80's revival bands do is a noisy, overloaded production: this helps give them the roughness in their sound that they need to

complement the simplicity of their music. They may not see themselves as quite the old-fashioned hardcore band that I do (after all, one of their songs opens with a sample and an acoustic intro thing), but the emotions I'm feeling listening to this are the same ones Side By Side made me feel, and if I'm barely restraining myself from shouting along to a chorus that goes "we (we!) can't (can't!) sit still!" ...well, it's pretty clear what's going on! Besides, even in the world of straight edge hardcore, the sample/acoustic intro thing goes back farther than Judge. Hey, they also have a song against Christmas and the consumerism that it's come to represent. Cool! —b

Goathead, Postbus 324, 7900 AH, Hoogeveen, Netherlands, or Discontent, Veldkampstr. 1, 7913 AL, Hollandscheveld, Netherlands

Poison the Well "Distance only makes the heart grow fonder" CD: Begins with a poorly edited sample that sounds like it was taken from an after-school special or made-for-TV movie. The music comes in suddenly, and it's a relief, it sounds good, well-recorded and spirited, powerful. They're playing largely midtempo late-'90's hardcore, a generally metal inflection to it, some melody in the guitar lines here and there, moments when the singers stop screaming and do a harmonizing singing thing. There doesn't seem to be much difference between the singers' voices; I suppose having two singers is most beneficial to them during the harmonizing parts, which are tasteful and haunting enough to work. Their songwriting still depends on the same e-chunk riffs that kept Morning Again running in place, but it goes beyond them into a world of prettier melodies, thank god. You know, they use a sample at the beginning of the third song as well, and it has that same annoying hum behind it, as if they got it from a TV with a poor connection... I wouldn't mention this except that it's annoying and I think they could do better. For the layout art, they rely heavily on the Renaissance artwork that has already been completely used up by hardcore bands earlier... for example, the inside of the tray card has the same fucking temptation of St. Anthony illustration that we first saw in (I think it was) Bloodlet's "Husk" 7". Now, these kids are also from Florida, they

should know better. Shortly after that the same picture was used in ads for the Hatebreed/Integrity split 7" that took three years to come out, and then in a million other records. Anyone who has ever seen an art history book *OR* flipped through someone's '90's hardcore 7" collection has seen all the artwork in here a hundred times. The Discharge photos of starving children and bodies were the bane of '80's punk record covers just as stolen art history illustrations are the cliché of the '90's. Let's see some fucking originality here! —b

Good Life

Prohaska "Cordoba Achtundeunzig" 7": This is quite an interesting little record, and I only wish I was fluent in German so I could make my way deeper into it. Basically, this is a concept record (a concept band, even) using football (soccer, we call it in the U.S.A.) as a metaphor for, let me quote the insert, "personal as well as political topics... we follow our self-proclaimed Cordoba-cult—somehow an Austrian fairy tale about a soccer game in 1978. We believe soccer symbolism can be understood everywhere, but to really be alive each of us needs to create his/her own fairytales. We want to encourage you to do so and we want to ask you to get in touch with us. Soccer is the truth." The insert contains a fair bit of writing on this topic, from various individuals, all in German. The music is far from the most important thing, it's more of a

Redemption "Until the Next Day" CD: I was absolutely unprepared for this. Last time I heard this band they hadn't even figured out how to get a good recording, and here they are sounding great, blowing me away, expanding the limits of their genre, even. This is tough-guy hardcore of the kind that is common and popular in Rome, yes, but they're doing plenty of new stuff here. God, the vocals, for one thing! They incorporate all this really haunting, pretty singing, not fucking Texas Is the Reason rock-emo singing, but genuine opera-style singing, that breaks my fucking heart, at the same time as the band is playing this macho moshcore—and then the guitars bring in metal melodies that reinforce what the vocals are doing and takes everything to a higher level. The other vocalist does the deep, tough NYHC-influenced singing I'd expected, but he does some great black metal-influenced screams too, and the recording is top notch, the band keeps managing to surprise me with the songs, right fucking on. The second song explodes right out of a touchingly beautiful melodic part at the end of the first song before I can even catch my breath, and the CD is like that the whole way through, always a step ahead of me. The lyrics, too, have that poetry in them that I've seen before in Italian hardcore (though never before in hardcore from Rome, which I thought [with a few exceptions, Timebomb, for one] was too concerned with fitting the macho image). I won't say this is among my top five favorite records to come out this year, but I think this is the most important record to come out in the metallic NYHC-style genre, for sure. It also comes across as sincere that the record label guy has a separate insert for his feelings and thanks list. —b

War.ds c/o Alessandro Andreoni, Via E. Medi 14, 00149 Roma, Italy

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vehicle to deliver their concepts. Stylistically, they're very much in the vein of the modern German hardcore bands (high shrieking, metallic music, etc.), not exceptional really. Before and after every song there are samples of a football announcer shouting (in German, of course) about a game in progress. It's interesting and a little daring for them to fuck around with the themes of mythologizing and football together, since both are so closely tied in to nationalism and the far right wing in Europe. But it's true that we all need to create our own mythologies, to attribute our own meanings to the stuff around us, even if it's just football... if life gives you lemons, make lemonade, right? And so many bands are trapped in traditional hardcore mythologies (straight edge, outsider machismo, rebel youth, political radicalism and revolution...) and metaphors (religious imagery and values, inverted or not, for example) that it's great to see this record appear to shake all that up. —b

Paracelsus, address elsewhere within Rain on the Parade "Body Bag" CD: Wow, check out these lyrics! "Hardcore and metal will never gel, so we're sending your sound back to hell! Send it back to the longhairs in a bodybag!" What the fuck? There's another place where they suggest that there's some connection between bands using more than "three chords" (and kids enjoying it) and paying \$30 to see a show. I'm amazed that one of these new school "old school" hardcore bands would actually go so far as to suggest that their sound is somehow more d.i.y. just because it's generic and unoriginal! This review section is filled with bands making complex and innovative music in a completely d.i.y. manner; in fact, these days it's actually the generic bands (Floorpunch, Better than a Thousand, etc.) that seem to exist to cash in on the music and styles made popular by *real* innovators over ten years ago. I don't know what the fuck these guys are doing, looking for a cause I guess... but seriously, aren't there more pressing problems in and out of hardcore than "longhairs" and their music? I haven't actually seen a real metalhead in years now, and all the people playing the complex and challenging metal-influenced music these guys are so scared of have had short hair since the Judge LP came out. Actually, I'm thrilled this band exists, since they're so easy to poke fun at! There's another classic on here called "Eating Crow," in which the singer expresses his regrets about joining the cult of straight edge: "Looking back, I shouldn't have said it, the commitment was too deep. But what the fuck did I know? I was fif-

Refused "The Shape of Punk to Come": For those looking for new musical ideas to keep hardcore alive, this is a whole Christmas of gifts, enough life's blood to keep us going for ten years more. For those looking for new political ideas and approaches to keep their resistance from going stale, Refused not only bring up new issues with more complex analyses (and obscure references) than we've seen anywhere before, but they invest their politics with so much exultation, so much headstrong youthful rapturous glory, that suddenly being anti-capitalist and radical seems even more thrilling and giddy than teenage love affairs and dance parties. For those desperate to shake off the creeping weight of time and disillusion, this record is hard, tangible proof of how much is possible, how much living and loving and fighting and discovering is out there, how much huge unexplored world still waits for each one of us, if only we have the ambition to stay alive, to keep pushing, to dare to demand what we want at every moment! This is fucking it, right here, the most important record for the close of the decade. Jazz drumming, digitally engineered feedback like songbirds and whistling kettles, electronic instrumentals, live clips, Van Halen bombast, screaming audience samples (taken from the Slayer live CD, no less!) behind musical fireworks never before achieved (bringing out the whole tension between rock music, spectacle, popularity, media, everything), radio announcer introductions, transitions no one in any genre ever dared consider, ever, one thousand innovations a minute, a recording with more subtleties and secret spaces in it than any major label record that ever came out, more emotional range than any band that has ever come before, rage like burning buildings in riots, beauty like sunrise over the fjords at five in the morning when you've been up with an illicit, irresistible lover all night, passion and resistance like no broken-windowed high school has ever known, rock like the world has never fucking seen or felt it. I can't tell you. You have to go there yourself. But this is the record that saved hardcore for me, that saved me for hardcore, that did it fucking all. Now let's take it further! When Dennis screams "we lack the motion to move to the new beat!", a challenge if I ever heard one, with these beats pumping in my adrenaline glands, these distorted guitars in my brain like the voice of God herself, I'm ready to do anything, betray anyone, run into gunfire, spit in policemen's faces, make love to strangers on public streets, chase down politicians with burning torches, *naked*, go without sleeping for weeks, sing and dance and scream and cry and triumph until everyone in the world is transformed and every moment of our lives is the most crushing, soaring poetry that has ever been written in blood, cum, sunrises and fire. Fuck yes. —b

Available for shoplifting in corporate record stores everywhere, courtesy of Epitaph and Burning Heart records! There's also an EP available from Burning Heart with two unreleased songs and a techno dance remix of the punk song Refused Are Fucking Dead.

Refused, live in Belgium and North Carolina: To make each moment matter, to make every one beautiful, to break out of the old world in one glorious instant of unfolding wings, like a bird from a shell. What band do we *not* need that from, and yet which ones offer it to us?

In Belgium, we were waiting for Refused to start, and the hip hop over the sound system suddenly stopped. A sample (Allen Ginsberg?) plays, evoking the beatnik world of coffee and jazz rhythm and poetry, and a techno beat starts. Refused dance out, "effeminate," in their crazy uniforms, and

teen. Made the promise, took the oath, eight years later I'm eating crow. Time to be a man and admit my mistake, time to put an end to the charade. You wanna talk about 'true til death'? I'm not thinking that far ahead." That's so hilarious, that we now have youth crew anthems about breaking the edge, what the fuck! —b

Soulforce, M.L.P., Apartado de Correos N. 18.199, 28080 Madrid, Spain
React "Disturbing the Souls..." 7": I don't like studio tricks like fading the music in when the band is already playing, but once React gets going they do OK. The black and white Celtic layout didn't lead me astray, they are exactly the kind of old-fashioned straightforward punk band that Profane Existence was releasing in its last days. And they are no less generic than the others, although they have enough energy to make for a good listen all the same. The other thing they have going for them is that really deep, dirty, rough and heavy sound that the best of the last crust bands had. Modern day hardcore punk bands like His Hero Is Gone brought something great to the genre when they interpreted and adapted this thick, grimy sound, and it works quite well in its original form here, too. Both React's vocalists (yes, a deep male singer and a shrieking female singer) have good voices, there are good dramatic Antisect parts here and there (at the end of the final song, for example), and the songwriting is tight (although how could it not be, with the formula having been run over and over and over for two decades?)... but it's hard for me to get any more excited about this record than I would about a Johnny-come-lately '80's straight edge hardcore record, you know? Still, if you don't have enough records by late-style crust bands singing about anarchist/punk issues (anti-fascist/racist, freedom for everybody, fuck state control and war), this fits the bill just fine. Here's a final note: at first I listened to it on the wrong speed, and with that extra velocity and unexpected higher pitch in the vocals, it was fucking great, it didn't even sound wrong... —b

Profane Existence, P.O. Box 8722, Minneapolis, MN 55408

Retconned "7": I'm really not sure how this ended up in the review box. This band, if they are one in the first place, is messing around with the whole electronic music thing. It comes off as sarcastic, I think, more like Milemarker than like the Curse of Yakub or another band that takes their computers seriously, but I'm really not sure. I mean, they can't actually think this sounds *good*, can they? There aren't actually any hardcore ideas being played with here

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(that's why it's weird we're reviewing this, since that's the "art movement" we cover), not musically at least, it's all weird grating electro-noise stuff, and the packaging has no lyrics or other information either, just a webpage address. And I'm sorry, you privileged fucks with web access, I don't really have it, especially not right now (going couch to couch to review these records on my friends' record players), so if there's something awesome about your band that I'm missing because it's hidden quite postmodernly in electro-land, too bad, the rest of the impoverished/computer-illiterate world will miss it too. The singer's obnoxious take on Nine Inch Nails rock vocals is stomach-turning at best, and god, yuck, ugh, bleagh. That's all I can bring myself to say. If this is the dehumanized, emotionless, pretentiously mechanized music of the modern age, and it may well be, we're fucked. Grab a weapon and take to the hills (if you can find any hills left), dark days are here. —b

No fucking address, either, I guess these kids have totally left us for the virtual world. I wonder if they'll cry into their computer terminals when they read my nasty review on some webpage message board somewhere. sorry to be such a jerk, but your technology revolution has left half the human race behind, and we kind of miss you.
www.mindspring.com/~omniac

Reveal "Through the eye of perfection evolution dies slowly" CD: Having just ranted at length about the thrice-stolen artwork of the Poison the Well CD, it's a wonderful thing to see all the great original artwork in this layout. Thanks for that, Reveal! I also like the way they list their band as consisting of themselves and about twenty friends, that's cool... who plays what is revealed (uh, sorry) by photos of instruments with names by them. The title of the record seems a little convoluted and reminiscent of the titles of other records on Good Life, they probably could have been more focused there. Anyway, I know you're waiting impatiently to hear about the music. The CD begins with a frightful sample ("there is no light without darkness," etc.) over feedback and eerie tom drumming, it's well-executed if familiar. Throughout the CD the guitarist does a good job of varying his sound with echoing acoustic parts, harmonics, metal shrieks, single string riffs, minor key open chords, etc., so he doesn't lose our attention; the singer too has a good understanding of how to use dynamics to keep his screaming vocals from getting too repetitive. In fact, at one point in the sixth song he sings a bit, and (unlike almost every other hardcore band that tries this!) it's beautiful, rather than annoy-

suddenly we all know that something is about to happen that has never happened at a hardcore show before. They grab their instruments and come in with the music instantly, in perfect sync, smashing that old world to bits, flying off the monitors, swinging the guitars wildly, leaping and kicking and dancing like madmen, Dennis swinging the microphone stand through the air and smashing it against the stage until it is bent into a knot, pieces of drumstick flying around David's ears, the air suddenly electric, as we have stepped out of the world into a place where every little detail matters, where everything is magic and you don't dare close your eyes for an instant, no. It is like a one night stand with the lover of your whole life's dreams and desires, and you wouldn't let a single detail escape for a thousand years of riches and fame.

David: he grins wildly like a blacksmith's deity, beating his sticks to literal splinters against his drums (at the end of each drum part, he lets the whittled or split drumsticks fly up from the drums on the final hit, grabs another pair, adjusts a cymbal with inhuman focus, and comes in with perfect precision, not a thought in the world but the music), his grimace a dare, a challenge, defiance to us mere humans, even, (he stares right at us, blankly, when Dennis takes five minutes to fake an orgasm onstage, while everyone stands frozen in shock,) his head and body always bobbing in time with the music, one arm raised before the next explosion to say "this is it, now or never, now we will fucking do it, no more silence, holding our peace, tonight we destroy and build anew like never before." On the most important hits, he leaps up in the air, crashing down upon his drums exactly with the beat. Between songs, he spins the sticks in his hands like wisps of smoke, tapping out little songs and melodies on the cymbals like none of us have ever seen. When Refused finished playing in North Carolina, he stood up from his drums, thinking he had the energy to stand, and staggered back, to crash against the wall behind him, nearly unconscious. Yes.

And the rest of the band, all flying around, Dennis doing tricks with the microphone stand, outdoing every rocker there has ever been, the guitarist coming centimeters from Matt's head each time, never hitting him, perfect control, what can I say that could capture this for you? They made time stop for an hour, they made everything matter like it never had before—and they did it with joy, not just pain, setting us all free from our demons and our stupid, earthbound superstitions that we would find beauty in our suffering rather than our pleasures and triumphs... they showed it to all of us, that the greatest courage of all is required to do what it takes to achieve real happiness, to seize life, to turn to the object of your secret lust and say "I have always wanted to kiss you," to fly off of tables when you're supposed to be sitting still, to scream opera when you're expected to mumble formula hardcore vocals. To fall in love with the wrong people and the wrong movements and the wrong music. To take your dreams and follow them into the fires, with such passion that no destruction can blot out what you do. Yes!

Refused is dead, you will never see them do this, but you can see it happen, you can see the same passion, if you make it yourself, if you do it yourself. Never again settle for mediocrity, for a moment's tedium! Live without dead time, love without constraints, fight without cowardice, lift us all up, lift us fucking up. We're waiting for you.

ing. And the drumming is also competent, far from just running through the same standard beats the drummer knows how to use fills and buildups to complement the music. The average Reveal song contains a fair bit of midtempo metal with chunky guitar riffs, etc., as you would expect from neighbors of the H8000 region that spawned Congress, Liar, and their kin; but their mastery of dynamics and variety in their music protects them from getting lost as another faceless modern hardcore band. The lyrics aren't too abstract, which is a danger for bands who want to be poetic but aren't yet sure how; still, they could be a little more profound, I think. We've actually toured with this band a bit, so I knew them before this CD, but I was pleasantly surprised at how well done this CD of theirs is. Here's my constructive criticism, if you Reveal guys ever read this: this CD shows that you have a good grasp of how to make music. Now your job is to evolve a more unique style, and to learn how to perform intensely enough live that your musical talents come across as emotions. I have no doubts that you can do this. —b

Good Life

Rotten Sound "Psychotic Veterinarian"

7": R.S. is an incredible grind band from Finland, not unlike their fellow countrymen Umlaut. They have a great recording, featuring a really powerful snare drum that still punches even during the fastest blastbeats, and a great drum/guitar mix all around... that's one of the most important things for a grind band to have, otherwise the music just doesn't come across right. [The other really important thing is raw, wild energy, which is why R.S. is a good grind band and all those Relapse pseudo-grind bands with their great recordings still suck.] They employ the low/high roaring/screaming vocals, and don't go anywhere with it that no one else has been, but it still makes for good listening... and, like every good grindcore band, they fancy up their songs with occasional unexpected/eclectic parts. The content here is pretty low, pretty dumb actually, although funny sometimes (the first song is called "Chainsaw is God," that's as good as it gets). Exploring the theme introduced in the title, between each song somebody imitates the characteristic noise of a different animal, followed by an explosion. Juvenile, but it's still a good record. —b

S.O.A., address at the foot of another grind band review

Roundhouse "Lashing Out" 7": You know those vocalists that listen to a lot of Breakdown and Madball, and try to sing deep and tough like their heroes, but it doesn't come easily for them, so

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in order to get that low, tough scream they have to sort of slur their speech and it comes out sounding like they have cotton in their mouths? This guy has that thing going on. The band are playing the kind of music that you would expect to go with those vocals: it has fast parts with three or four chords repeated open over a one-two beat, alternated with chunkchunkchunk chunkchunkchunk mosh parts. The lyrics don't have anything actually dumb in them, they seem to be attacking ignorance and even misogyny at one point, although they're not specific enough for me to really be sure. If the singer can work on building up his voice a little so he can carry off the vocals better, and the band tighten up their playing and writing, Roundhouse's music will work better. —b

Free Spirit, P.O. Box 1252, Madison Sq. Station, New York, NY 10159

Saddest Day [™] CD: Moody, bittersweet emo/hardcore with a great recording (especially for this genre and locale) and great packaging (even for this genre: homemade cardstock and fabric cover with velcro, plus a 'zine with bilingual lyrics, explanations, and manifestos) from Brazil, super diy and political. There's plenty of real, open-wound emotion in here; if the songwriting was a little more catchy, so the songs could stick with you better, this would be a great record. As it is, it still makes for great listening, and it just plain feels good to listen to a record made by sincere kids. None of the topics were actually things I hadn't thought about before, but they're all important: making hardcore more than a leisure-time activity, how to survive miserable times with love of life intact, the plight of the dispossessed in capitalist society, the controls technology itself exerts over modern life... As to the music itself, there are two singers, both with shrieky voices, one higher than the other; the songs are fairly long and exploratory; with droning guitar lines and melodic leads, soft acoustic parts, and more aggressive chunky parts here and there. I guess I've made it sound like good records like this are a dime a dozen in this review, but they're really not—something this well-done and well-presented is a rare find, so if this sounds good to you, try to track it down. —b

Doublethink, 83 Bryant Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201

Scalplock "To Hate is To Cure" CD: This is another CD worthy of an entire page worth of reviewing which will instead have to succumb to the restrictions of last minute deadlines. 28 political songs timing in at 39:16. Imagine the higher pitched screech of a death/grind styled vocal (but not too far over the top, I am hearing a Negative Approach style in here as well) over metallic punk, and you have got their musical angle down. Most of the songs are in the same exact feel, and this is an easy CD to put on as back ground music, but one look at the lyric booklet which accompanies the CD would prevent this band from ever being cast onto the back burner. All of the songs are political, dealing with capitalist domination; ethnocentricity; indigenous rights; violent revolution (not always my first choice of action, but valid at times nonetheless); American imperialism; population expansion; peasant uprisings...fuck! There is a lot here to digest. The layout is really slick: glossy with political photos which look like they got permission from some major publication to print, because they look really sharp, laid out in a style which Crass made famous years back. There is an intro essay as well which describes where they are coming from: "Revolutionary objectives, and their implementation, must begin with suppression of Western Capitalist influence..." This record has some parts which make me leery: the M-16 rifle on

the cover is a bit unnerving, but I guess that is the point. I wish there had been some addresses inside where people could contact the band directly, and get more information about what they have going on politically and how to get involved. Then again, if you are out killing people and inciting violence, you probably don't want to let that be known.

Insurrection Records; P.O. Box 2576; Colchester; Essex CO3 4ay; ENGLAND
Section 8 "Throw a Spanner into the Works" 7": Yes, this is another fucking '80's style hardcore record, with the same exact flourishes and beats and riffs I've heard on at least five other records this issue, but I still have to give

them some credit: they have eleven songs on this 7"! That means they know how to keep a song down to the minimum length it needs to be; so, no fat whatsoever in their songwriting, nothing boring or extraneous. They've got plenty of energy, good, conscious (if nonspecific) lyrics, a clear enough recording, and their singer sounds like he really means it when he's yelling until his voice tears. Their bass sound is pretty trebly and weak, but that's not really important in their case, they don't need much force in their production for the adrenaline to come across. Thinking about it, there may actually be kids in the hardcore scene today who never listened to Youth of Today or their contemporaries, so maybe it's OK that bands like Section 8 (that can play that style competently without adding anything to it musically) exist for their sake. If you heard all those bands, you probably will think this is a good record but not put it on too much, if at all. On the other hand, as their lyrics say, "my memories were not good enough, so I just had to experience them again..." —b

Bridge records, somewhere in Sweden
Separation [™] 10": Separation know how to write a good, short, to-the-point punk rock song, and their lyrics are their finest point, placing them squarely in a tradition of motivated, motivating political bands. They're not going to like this very much, but in places they remind me of a much more straightforward, more punk Refused: I'm thinking especially of their first song, when the singer shouts "Oh yeah!" and the guitar drops out, leaving the bass and drums doing something groovy, before the

guitar comes back in with those three notes in a row that Refused often use. I just spent fifteen minutes going through Refused's last CD looking for the place where Dennis shouts something and the guitars drop out, leaving the bass and drums doing something groovy—I couldn't find it right off (maybe it's on the CD before that?) but it's not so important anyway, I guess. And all this is not at all to say that Separation lacks an identity—they have other songs that don't sound like any of the other Umea bands, faster punker songs that do different things with melody, and those songs comprise most of this record. The lyrics, as I said, are the thing here that's really important to me, I'm not nearly as excited about this music as I am about them: here's "History in Fourteen Seconds" in its entirety: "Every day the new is told through the same discourse as the old, so if we care then it's our role to make sure that is never sold back to us. Yeah." And some more excerpts: "If you fail to see the obvious limitations of only screaming at those who already know, then your efforts won't make that much of a difference and a sore throat is probably just as far as you will go." "We're thankful you're having us and we're glad you don't stand still, but hopefully we'll challenge more than just your dancing skills. You see we're more than you expected us to be, and we'll proceed as soon as we have nothing more to speak..." "It's not for me to forget my dreams... and I'm sorry to say that instead of living your life I'd

Resist and Exist "Dare to Struggle—Dare to Win!" 7":

Burned out as we all are on generic dis-band anarcho-punk, I was really hoping this would be more than that (it was the circle @ on the cover, dressed up yet again in the Conflict style, that scared me). But no, this is not rehash, this is the real thing! As spirited, explicitly political, articulate and radical as Crass (and they have a part in the first song with two different speaking parts that is very, very Crass), as dramatic as Nausea or Oi Polloi, this makes me feel, for one soaring, glorious minute, as though political punk rock is not dead. Unlike those black-and-white cookie-cutter anarcho-repetition bands, R.&E. know how to write and play a real song, and their passionate music makes their politics real, makes them carry the emotional weight they need to matter. There are some moments when they're just playing the old three chord punk, but it still sounds vital, and they never fail to up the ante by adding solos or transitions to even more anthemic lines. The loud-speaker echo on the vocals at the beginning of the second song gives the vocals there a sort of Big Brother announcement feel, which works, and they're able to work similar magic with other old punk traditions (their blues guitar leads really do sound apocalyptic, their male and female vocals sound like an angry, unique man and an angry, unique woman, not two people playing anarcho-roles). And politically, they're right on, of course, not just addressing issues like sexism that everyone can get behind, but going into cultural imperialism and assimilation. The back of their lyrics sheet is a copy of the "Abolish the White Punk" essay from the last issue of Profane Existence. The band even urges listeners to write them for an additional booklet addressing more issues. —b

Spiral, 1916 Pike Place #12, Seattle, WA 98101

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rather dance the night away." —b

Phyte, address nearby

Shockwave "Warpath" 7": Ah yes, Shockwave. Smiling bombs drawn in the famous Mike Ski style on the cover with a backdrop of snow camouflage...I steadied myself for the inevitable. Flipping over the record, I found more camo, with the SA Mob logo superimposed over a Path of Resistance crew photo of a gang of kids wearing matching Shockwave hoodies, baklavas and gasmasks (that's right, GASMASKS!). Four songs: "Devastator"; "Kickback"; "Bombshell" and "Warpath", all of which sound like Jamey Hatebreed

singing for an Earth Crisis/Hatebreed family reunion of somekind. This appears to be all serious, and that is what makes it most ridiculous. A tongue-in-cheek record, sort of the Grudge of tough-guy for all you old schoolers out there. My only fear is that true macho nerds will take this seriously and agree with the singer who laments "I'm not going to sit and suffer anymore / I'm getting armed to the teeth and I'm declaring war". I find it ironic that there is little differentiation in the lyrical content between the current icons of hardcore and the joke bands of hardcore. Either our revolutions are totally ineffective and have been reduced to comedy, or our comedy is completely accurate. Not sure what else to tell you about this. Not funny enough to merit purchasing over the Good Clean Fun record, but it would be nice as background music to a day of weightlifting. JUG SA MOB; P.O. Box 1931; Erie PA 16507-0931

Sight For Sore Eyes "CD": This recording starts with some pretty, distant major key harmonics, and dashes into some fast, melodic hardcore tinged with a sort of tragic optimism. The vocalist is singing melodically, and the music is definitely recognizable as fitting into that "rocking melodic hardcore" genre, but it's well written enough to not fall in and get lost in the genre the way so many bands do. The first song is probably the best, it just has this bittersweet beauty that makes this work like almost no other melodic hardcore that I've heard. That present to varying extents in their other songs as well, and they work or don't work to those various extents. I swear, I usually don't like this kind of music at all, but the emotion here is genuine enough and comes across deeply enough that I'm actually really into this. Speaking only musically, this is among my favorites thus far of the records I've heard from Brazil. There could be more variety, I find my attention wandering around the fifth of the ten songs, and I keep wanting to go back to that first song. The lyrics deal largely with emotional relationships between people, without much poetry but with some sincerity. They're much less explicitly political than the other bands I've heard from Brazil. The verdict: if you're interested in finding some melodic "emotional" hardcore stuff that is actually good, this is worth it, primarily for the first song. —b

Liberation, Caixa Postal 4193, Sao Paulo S.P., 010061-970 Brazil

Skycamefalling "...to forever embrace the sun" CD: I didn't expect to be excited about this, but I have to grant that they're really good at what they're doing, and it's not just rehash either. In the course of just the first song, they demonstrate a remarkable versatility, successfully navigating from aggressive, metallic hardcore to much more haunting melodic material, the singer screaming at one moment and adding eerie background singing at another, and all of it works. Their singer knows how to do his part, too, he sounds like he really cares about the words he's singing, which is rare these days. Their

riffs and arrangements keep their freshness through the rest of the CD, they use more melody and beauty in their metal than most bands, which sets them apart. Their guitarists know how to use a variety of tones, too, which helps a lot, and like almost every band in here with a really positive review, their drummer is doing more than just keeping time. The fourth song is an extended echoing acoustic guitar soliloquy of a quality, length, and seriousness that few other hardcore bands today would dare attempt. With clumsy song titles like "Of Adornment and Disgust" and "The Fall of Cain's Countenance," I didn't expect to like the lyrics much, and I'm not unusually impressed by them, though there are a few gems ("we have become the gods to destroy ourselves"), and the fact that they're sung with feeling helps. If only this band had come across as having brains and hearts in the interview I read with them, I'd be probably be really excited about them right now. Hey, here's something: the layout looks great, and it's because their friend took all the photos for it. —b

Good Life

Slave One "7": My copy of this skips like a schoolgirl, and just for fun, I have been sitting here listening to the steady pop of the skips in the first groove of the record as it goes around and around and around at 33RPM. It has made me think though: what if this is their music? What if they are the most original minimalists in the history of punk? What if it really isn't skipping after all and I am actually listening to the rhythmic popping of their intended message?! My interpretation of what this is supposed to represent could read something like: *The heartbeat of revolution is inevitable*. Interesting, but there is a record to review here. Excuse me., I have been at this too long today. Ok, moving over to the stereo now to give it a little tap...um...somebody must be playing a joke on me because now the steady pop every few seconds is a bit lower pitched and almost silent. Hmm...the heartbeat can fade, but it is never fully extinguished. One more little tap...and...voila! The higher pitched tap returns. Fuck this. Moving the needle onto the middle of a song produces what sounds like a stuttering band. Not a stuttering man, but a stuttering band. It sounds heavy guitar oriented, or at least well produced. This is skipping constantly. I will move on past the vinyl and review the other components. The layout is a yellowish piece of paper (forgive me, I am colorblind...really!) photocopied and difficult to read, but I can see that the lyrics are personal and vague (in meaning as well as visibility). There is a photo behind the words of a person laying dead with their face smashed in, which I hope isn't intended to represent me for having done this shitty review, but what the fuck do you want me to do? At least I tried. Get in touch with them and ask if all the records sound like this, which I really doubt. This might be the most accurate review I have done in this issue for all I friggin' know. JUG

Slave One; P.O. Box 123951; Ft. Worth TX 76121; kjoy0001@jove.acs.unt.edu

Spit Acid "12": This is a German record from a few years ago that I guess Conquer the World has rereleased (or is just distributing??) in the U.S. Their hardcore definitely has a personality of its own; there's a lot of melody in it, but a fair bit of bite as well. They manage to fill out the full length with enough variation and new ideas to make it work all the way through—there are slower parts where the melody and singing is emphasized, faster parts with rougher singing and plenty of sharp edges, chunky parts with speaking, and on the first side even a great part with blastbeats and screaming. The

Self Conviction "A War to Show That Peace Means Justice For Everyone" CD: This is the CD that made me realize how much fucking important stuff is happening in the Brazilian hardcore scene. The writing, lyrics, and liner notes are taken so seriously and done so well, so much better than any other band this issue (with the single exception of Refused), that this should be an example for every other band to follow. The insert begins with an essay explaining why the lyrics to each song are accompanied by quotes from lyrics to older hardcore songs ("more than a simple homage, we are trying to show hardcore is more than just music—it has been our culture."), and it ends with discussions of the implications of the lyrics to certain songs, which go into great depth, followed by Self Conviction's political statement of purpose, a many-page manifesto: "Revolution Has to Come," "Whose Revolution?" "Revolution, but Where?" "Revolution, but How?" "Revolution, but When?" "Revolution, but Why?" "Destroy Capitalism!" "This is Third World Hardcore," and, finally, a little fuck off to those bands (most of which happen to be from the U.S., I'd like to point out) that spread consumer thinking by endorsing particular products and brands. The music is energetic, straightforward '90's hardcore, a quick midpace, not as many guitar chunks as you might fear (they're replaced with more grandiose open-chord riffs), not poorly recorded or played or produced (although maybe the high hat is a little loud in the mix?)...the two vocalists range between yelling and screaming parts, gang vocals, and some other parts that are more influenced by rap delivery. I enjoy the music, mostly because you can hear the conviction and idealism in it, but it's the liner notes that really get me. If you get one 'zine this month, make it this CD. —b

Liberation, Caixa Postal 4193, Sao Paulo, SP, 01061-970 Brazil

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craziness and ferocity that characterizes so many of today's German bands can be seen here in an earlier, developing form, in between (or, often, complementing) the melody. I could see these guys playing with Belgium's Blindfold when they were around, but I think Spit Acid would have blown them away. The insert is a good, lengthy booklet, with the lyrics in German and English and various explanations/other writings in German, illustrated by a cut and paste layout that uses drawings from political artists like Eric Drooker. —b
Conquer the World, P.O. Box 40282, Redford, MI 48240
or Per Koro, address elsewhere within

Sottopressione "Cosi' Distante" CD: This band plays a simple enough old-fashioned hardcore, something like their label mates Strange Corner, but they have more speed and more energy, enough to kick them over the threshold into the world where music that matters is made. The singer yells with some melody in his voice, he sounds like he cares about what he's doing, and the speedy simple riffs propel him forward just fine, just as he propels everything else. Yeah, I've listened to most of the CD now, and my interest has only grown. The lyrics are sung in Italian, with translations printed next to the original versions, and they're good lyrics too, they have that poetry that Italian lyrics often have. It's a kind of unaffected lyricism that I just haven't seen from punk bands of any other nation: "in a few seconds a hell of splinters chokes down the reason..." "concrete chasm, chewed up by a crowd of ghosts..." OK, the record's over, and I have more energy and optimism about the punk aesthetic now than when it started. Thank god energetic bands who play like they mean it still exist, thank god bands like Sottopressione still exist. —b
Vacation House, address close by below

Spineless "A Talk Between Me and the Stars" CD: You can hear in moments of this CD (for example, the haunting melodic intro and the black metal riff that follows it) the struggles of the H8000 "edgemetal" scene to transcend the musical style they have carefully developed over the past few years. They don't quite make it with this CD—after that promising beginning, Spineless goes back to the Belgian formula of fast chunky metal riffs for most of the record. But this isn't a purely water-treading record for them or their scene, and that's worth something. Another promising feature of this CD is the first song, which is in French. I think enough of the people who will get this CD can speak French (even I can understand a little) that this is a move that, rather than merely preventing half their audience from understanding their lyrics, will encourage people to recognize the value and great potential of languages besides English in hardcore. The vocals sound a little funny throughout the record, a little distant and distorted, which is strange, since everything else in the mix is well-balanced and fits together smoothly. I like the speaking and literary references in "Afraid to Live," their ode to the question of mortality. There's a strange song near the end called "At War With Emo," I can't tell exactly how they intend the title; here are some lyrics, in case you can figure it out: "Look at me. Hear what I say. Feel my warmth. Take care of me. Or play with me (or just notice me)... you ask the birds to sing with you. You ask the trees to play with you..." It's tempting for me to stop there, but I'd better sum up: I've always liked Spineless more than most of their Belgian contemporaries, because they take a couple more risks, and because when they do the generic Belgian metal thing, they often do it better. Here there's a mixture of effective generic metal, new experiments that work, and new experiments that don't; but it comes out well enough to be worth a try, I think. —b

Sober Mind, P.O. Box 206, 8500 Kortrijk, Belgium
Static 84 "Another Funeral" 7": First and foremost, what the hell is going on with this thick European vinyl today??? This fucking thing is like an inch

thick and weighs twelve pounds. Ok, an exaggeration, but it is really neat to have a record which feels heavy and chunky rather than sounding that way for once. This is a good record...it reminded me a great deal of 411, in that it is mostly midtempo with scattered fast parts, and has vocalist who speaks his notes in a style approaching conversation when he is not singing them. With slightly better production, and this is not at all bad for a 7", you would easily be able to make out what he was saying. I can almost hear some "whoa whoa" backups in this, though they are not there, but the music has that catchy feel to it. The lyrics run the gamut between the personal to the

remotely political, meaning that there is nothing all too specific, but social commentary on humanity/society and how "end of human being would be a blessing to the world", which I think is a bit silly. I am not into the extinction of any species, including my own, but I know what these guys are getting at. Maybe we could just select a large group of human beings...no, I don't like the implications of that either. So, there are six songs here, and a layout which is pretty sharp: a cardstock folded sheet which combines drawings and clear photos. Worth checking out if you can find it around...I haven't seen it much in the States. JUG

Bad Influence Records c/o Stefan Fuchs;
Ludwig-Thoma-Str. 14; 93051
Regensburg; Germany;

stefanfuch@metronet.de

Stormshadow "Black Power" 7": This comes with a thick booklet and even a photocopy of an essay introducing anarchism by Emma Goldman. The booklet contains, among other things, quotes from Howard Zinn, Henry Miller, and Rupert Pupkin ("king of comedy"?), lyrics/explanations/lengthy essays for all their songs, and spunky cut-and-paste artwork to illustrate it all. All that inclined me favorably towards Stormshadow, and they didn't let

me down with their music: they're not the most talented, tight, or polished band, but they're trying new things, there's a sense of freedom in their songwriting that carries over into the emotion in the songs themselves, and that fits well with their anarchist ideas. Their standard approach is a sort of bouncy, messy hardcore romp, but they mix it up with plenty of other stuff (offbeat ska-style chords, jazz/swing parts that are carried off much better than you'd expect, pop punky parts, more weird stuff). The bassist has a gruff screaming voice that's kind of funny to me (funny in a good, entertaining way, like a puppet), and it's contrasted nicely by the high yelling screams of the guitarist. Samples... hm, they use the same sample that works so well at the beginning of the ABC NO RIO benefit CD, but they didn't use it quite as effectively, and it's always just too bad when two different groups use the same sample. Oh well. The song topics are all awesome, let me go through them: the first one is just a celebration of the passion of punk rock, right on. The second is about the racist crusade the American legal system is carrying out against young non-whites, and it's accompanied by an appropriate essay about the issue. The third song is about Orson Wells, whimsically enough, and how the corporate movie industry tried to squash his attempts to pursue his artistic visions, so he followed them on his own. D.I.Y.! There's a song about anarchism, a typical anthem about empowerment accompanied by essays from two band members about, you guessed it, anarchy, and why it can work. "Viva la Vulva" is an anti-sexism song (well, more than that, really, it's better to say that it's a song in favor of awareness of gender issues in general), and it's followed by a song called "Race Myth" that should cause a little controversy (for in the course of asserting that our conception of race is a construct of the ruling class, they deny that race itself exists). The final song is a song of appreciation for the bassist's father, who almost died of a heart attack. It's heartwarming to see family ties and affection being cel-

Serene "Inward Flowering" CD: The idea of having a style of music known as "emo" music, short for "emotional," has always struck me as being extremely pretentious. All music expresses emotion, or else it isn't fucking music, if you ask me. I always thought "music" was itself the science of how sounds affect people emotionally. But anyway—let's grant "emo" music legitimacy as a genre for a moment, just for the sake of argument, and let's say that genre is characterized by the use of melody and dynamics to evoke atmospheres of beauty and sadness. If that's the case, Serene is the ultimate crossover band between the purist "emo" and hardcore genres: their songs are built from the prettiest, most heartbreaking melodies, but they're delivered with the energy and distortion and abandon that I associate with the best hardcore bands. The result is something really powerful, really emotional in the best sense of the word. One of the strongest things they have going for them in straddling this gulf is their singer's screaming voice: it's shot, high, screechy, and it cuts through the beautiful guitar lines like a cry of pain through a warm summer night. The songs themselves are catchy and timeless, they're delivered with a good understand of when to play hard and when to hold back, the lyrics are as open and honest and revealing as the performances, and this is just one great record. —b
Genet, P.O. Box 447, 9000 Gent 1, Belgium

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ebred on a hardcore record... I'm a little jealous that he has them in the first place, really. Not many of us do. —b

Ch-Ching records, P.O. Box 218, Edison, NJ 08818

Strange Corner "Schism" CD: This sounds like it came out a good ten years ago, when the Cro-Mags were high on everyone's list of influences. Simple guitar lines, fast music, yelling vocals that sound a little like loud speaking, all lacking urgency somehow. The guitar is mixed low, it sits back behind the loud vocals and the drums, but that wouldn't be enough to rescue this if it were different. There are plenty of slower parts, occasional double bass, but it all sounds really old-fashioned. That's not a bad thing in itself but it isn't so great here. If you're so obsessed with the era of the Cro-Mags dominance in hardcore that you can't get enough of bands that draw on their aesthetic, you might not mind listening to this. Otherwise, well, you know. I guess in this day of hardcore pretension and melodrama there's something appealing about the honest simplicity of this record. To not end this review on a negative note, I'll quote some lyrics that I think are great: "hey you, little atom, what do you want? I know you are defenseless, but you have made the world a slave... you create energy useful to science, but we stupid men don't seem to understand the price we'll have to pay for every fucking favor of yours. You don't look anyone in the eye, and if someone tells you to go, you destroy plains mountains towns and seas..." —b

Vacation House, Via S. Michele, 56, 13069 Vigliano Biellese (BI) Italy

Stricken For Catherine "Letters Not Sent" CD: This CD begins with a repeating pulse on the bass, and then the acoustic guitar comes in over it, doing the pretty emo music thing. Soon enough we get distorted guitar and a guy singing melodramatically/melodically over it. I think this is what emo music today sounds like: mid-tempo, pretty (or would-be pretty) melodies, extremely quiet wandering acoustic parts, etc. This isn't as bad as I was afraid it would be, it's rescued by their willingness to let go and make some noise and chaos in the midst of their pretty music. Yeah, that saves them from being pure pretension, they seem to actually be feeling something and trying

to get it across. There's some tension here, and the lyrics (while often straying into the domain of pretentiousness themselves) sometimes do decent things: "you meant something more than a friend, you need disciples now. I'm not sorry for this situation..." So OK, I'm not much of a fan of this musical style, and I'm sure that's coming out in my review... but the fact is that while they're trying hard, I suppose, and have some original musical ideas, their songwriting is just not good enough yet to persuade an emo non-believer to take their music seriously. That says something itself. Music becomes music exactly the moment it transcends genre, I think... not that there's no reason for genre, genre exists so that people can learn from each other in their struggles to make a particular kind of music work; but when music works it rises above boundaries. So S.F.C. is onto something, but they need to follow it through a little further to start getting positive reviews in magazines like *Inside Front* that have traditionally not been emo-friendly zones. —b

Espo, P.O. Box 63, Allston, MA 02134

Subhumans "Unfinished Business" CD: Six songs and an intro from the early days of this classic punk band. I grew up on the first four Subhumans 7"s, they were pretty much punk gospel to me, so I was glad to get my hands on this stuff... predictably, the best tracks are the four written back in 1981,

they're up to par with anything else the Subhumans did back then, especially "No Thanks." Many of the songs are recent recordings, which amazingly sound exactly the same as the old recordings in production and amps and everything—! No band today could get that sound if they tried with both hands and a whole van-full of "vintage" equipment. I think the older recordings have a certain invisible something that sets them apart (again, "No Thanks," and the live "Song #35"), but this is all good stuff. If you haven't heard the Subhumans before, I can't even start to describe them here, I just have to say that between their subtle and never-dogmatic politics, their simple

yet never stagnant music, and their up-front sincere attitude, they were deservedly one of the most influential and well-remembered bands of their day. Start with the "Religious Wars" 7" if you haven't heard them before (as fast as you can, too); but if you've got the early records, you should probably get this, even if you thought they softened up a bit in the later '80's. And hey, "Motorway Song" (apparently an outtake for one of those old 7"s) really does capture how maddening it can be to be lost on the highways looking for the show. —b

Bluurg, 2 Victoria Terrace, Melksham, Wilts SN12 6NA England

Svart Sno "Smock'n Roll" 12: Everything that's good about this record is what was good about the best, roughest punk bands from the '80's that didn't give a fuck and went all out. The music is rugged, fast, punch-drunk, not too much variety but plenty of raw go go go, and the lyrics (yelled in throaty Swedish) are unambiguous, unpretentious, candid and bold. I'd much rather listen to this than try to enjoy the polished musicianship on some soulless modern metallic hardcore record, even if said record included a brand new way of playing leads over mosh parts or whatfuckingever. Here's what S.S. has to say on the subject: "you should not drink light beer if intoxication is the goal, check the label on the bottle if you want to have control—with music it's just the same, insincerity won't do, consume a fake product and stand there like a fool." They also have a song about using voodoo dolls to bring down the defenders and figureheads of the system: "I have a doll and I can shape it anyway I choose, when it takes the form of the head of state, he is bound

to lose. I like politicians and people who are rich, the doll becomes just like them and they will start to itch. My doll is a weapon when it's used against the wealthy, I hit my doll with a hammer, for them it's not very healthy." Hope it works, mere punk music hasn't brought those motherfuckers down yet... —b

Prank, address not hard to find... it's even in this issue somewhere, I bet!

Talk Is Poison "" CD: Here is Talk Is Poison, ready to rescue us from the pretension and sterile shrink-wrapped perfectionism of the run-of-the-mill hardcore bands of the late '90s. They play fast, their riffs are simple and their songs average significantly under two minutes, they sound like they jump around even in the studio, their guitarists do those '80's guitar shrieks to bring in new parts, they're not too stuffy or uptight about playing every note perfectly, and—best of all—they actually sound a bit like they might be struggling to play this fast. I haven't heard bands that sounded like they were speeding at the limit of their ability for many years, and it really counts, I think. These aren't the catchiest songs ever written, though they're not entirely forgettable; if they were any more catchy, this record would be a fucking instant classic, in my opinion. The lyrics are as raw and insistent as the

Stalingrad "Patty We Kind of Missed You on Your Birthday" CD: At the more powerful moments of this CD, when it takes complete possession of me, I am walking down a hall in a seedy hotel, the doors passing by me in a haze, blood upon them and the floor, a knife in my hand... Stalingrad creates these simple grooves, charged with more nervous adrenaline and loathing than any other band could summon, and captures you with them, draws you in, hypnotized, willing or not. Few other bands have ever done so much with such simple parts—not to say they haven't expanded their song structures for this record, incorporating some faster parts and more changes, but it is the simple, repeating parts that still set them apart. One song includes a riff that sounds like a Stalingrad version of a Lynyrd Skynyrd song, and, ironically enough, another song (which sounds more like Stalingrad) is a cover of said band. Their singer is the other barrel of the shotgun, ripping his throat out, or whispering at us in a violent yet almost vulnerable hiss that really can make you uneasy. The singers from Doom and Voorhees participate in a song each, too... and the songs are all split up by abrasive post-industrial noise, created on the singer's home-made equipment. The layout emphasizes the antisocial incoherence of the lyrics by mixing in various random historical events (murders, kidnappings, etc.), refusing to acknowledge where one song ends and another begins, and being a general pain in the ass to wade through. At the end the songs from their picture disc 7" (including the incomparable "In Death In Dreams") and a few other tracks are included. They didn't include the songs from the split 7" with Underclass, though, which I still insist are classics. "Feeling numb as blood flows," says a snatch of the liner notes. Yes indeed. —b

Armed With Anger, P.O. Box 487, Bradford, BD2 4YU, U.K.

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vocals and the rest of the music, which is perfect; they don't really warrant reprinting here, but they work fine with the rest of the package. When I think of really "old school" hardcore, this is the sort of thing that comes to my mind, and I think we could use plenty more of it. —b

Prank, P.O. Box 410892, San Francisco, CA 94141-0892

Thumbs Down "Crossroads" CD: This is absolutely by-the-numbers old-fashioned simple hardcore/punk stuff. It's perfectly executed, but how could it not be, this style of hardcore was perfected by 1988 and hasn't changed since, much to my consternation. It takes a band like Intensity to take a genre this old and stuffy and breathe new life into it, and Thumbs Down doesn't have quite what it takes. I mean, this record is good, nothing goes wrong in the course of it, the backing crew vocals are all on time, it's well recorded etc., but there are other records I would put on if I wanted to hear this kind of music, old records that still have more freshness to them. Example: the riff that comprises their eighth song ("No Retreat, No Surrender") was the Exploited's song "Alternative" ten years before today's generation of hardcore kids got their first punk record... there's just not much more left that can be done with this old-fashioned, dated musical style that hasn't already been done, and that's all there is to it. T.D. are good at what they do, and all it would take for me to enjoy their next record would be for them to develop one characteristic to set them apart from the herd. I hope they do! —b

Genet records, address not here... try nearby?

Toxic Bonkers "If the Dead Could Talk" CD:

This is a Polish grindcore band, with double bass, mosh parts, a distorted bass which makes a brief (one note) appearance at the beginning of the fifteenth track, the guitars mixed too quiet, a deep-voiced growling singer and a more mid-ranged screamer, and a pretty funny fucking name. This isn't bad, and it's the kind of obscure record that I'll listen to on principle just to perplex my friends, but I don't think anything happens here that hasn't happened already (and more smoothly, no doubt) on an Assuck record. Actually, I think every single thing that has ever happened on an Assuck record happens here at some point, political lyrics and topics included, which is pretty impressive when you think about it. Their Polish nationality makes some of the issues strike closer to home than they do in Florida, no doubt. If their recording was just a little smoother and heavier, I would have no reason not to listen to this instead of Assuck when I'm in the mood for grindcore. As it is, though, I don't listen to Assuck much, and at sixteen tracks, this starts to really drag for me. —b

S.O.A. c/o Paolo Petralia, Via Oderisi da Gubbio, 67/69, 00146 Roma, Italy
Uproven Truth "7": I am a dick. I listened to side one of this once through on 45 RPM and was pretty into it...it sounded like a melodic GISM with higher pitched vocals and speed metal guitars. I'd started my review really positively. Then, unfortunately, I discovered that the record is actually a 33 RPM (it says it right on the record, but I was oblivious to that). Now, it sounds just bizarre. There are three songs here by this German band, and for a 33 RPM that is actually pretty cool, as the third song has a side to itself and times in at the average length of two songs for any other record. It is an opus of sorts, but I'll get to that in a minute. This is a difficult record for me to get into, but I am trying. The first song is about people who lie (appropriately called "Liar") and it reads like you'd expect, except for one verse which says "I love your music / hate your approach / I love your voice / but I hate your speech" which I found sort of interesting. Song number two is about being driven to despair by "chaos" in one's head, ultimately deciding to give up and

kill oneself, which I didn't find interesting at all. Song three, the opus, has the least lyrics of all and repeats them throughout. Something about despair within wasted days and years. The music repeats as well, sort of a droning heavy metal with wandering melodies played on super fuzzed out guitars. The final words on the record are a sample of a woman's voice which says "I've been begging for help." I don't get it when played at 33 RPM, and though I don't get it at 45 RPM either, I like it better that way. JUG

\$3 including postage to: Mark; 815 18th St. #4; Sacramento CA 95814, USA
Vanilla "Social Evening and French Divorce" 12": I've always heard about

the French school of emo, but never really heard any of it. I guess this is it (the tongue-in-cheek cover reads: "Social Evening and French Divorce" is a challenge to mature musicgoers... from the pioneers of the 'Paris Redwine Emo'). I expected it to be softer than it is, actually, and I was pleasantly surprised to discover that they keep their music up to the same energy level as, say, Fugazi. Earlier Fugazi is probably a decent comparison for this—the aesthetics seem to be the same here, with the jangly melodies, the throaty singing, the well-orchestrated changes and arrangements, the poetically coded lyrics, the not infrequent experiments in format and instrumentation, the mix that features more mid-range than most metallic hardcore. There's definitely emotion in this music, and if music like this was more to my taste, I would probably listen to this a fair bit. It's not, of course (all I want to listen to is Nausea, the Amebix, Systral, Stalingrad...), but I can tell there's something good going on here. The vocals don't even sound too forced or melodramatic to me. Hm... I wonder if these guys ever played with Monobrow Jones In The Spring? —b

Conquer the World, not a particularly dependable label in my experience, P.O. Box 40282, Redford, MI 48240

Versvs "Trece" CD: Seven songs at 24:54. The best lyrics of any release so far today out of all the stuff I have reviewed! Thank you, great spirit of hardcore for sending

me this offering. I was about to lose my fucking mind in personal lyric drudgery. Politics mixed with hardcore topics mixed with personal frustration...angry and gruff like a bulldog...this vocalist sounds like Rick Ta Life on a day when he's having a sore throat, throaty and distorted almost to the point of being unintelligible. Lyrical examples from each of those styles are as follows (each song is printed in both English and Spanish(?)): from "There's No Justice": *A period of prosperity in a corrupted system / justice raped by the power of money / Torture and force abuse / those are the laws of fear...* from "Versus": *I against you / I against your fucking ignorance / your false tolerance / your system based on lies / your hypocrisy / your disrespect / your methods of punishment / that's why I confront you today...* from "Daily Revolution": *Revolution in your mind, in your daily life / Resurrection of your soul, of your hope / Maybe you won't change the world, maybe there's no future, but by breaking the rules you're winning the war.* So with those in mind, I can tell you that the music is NYHCish and spuer heavy/slow to mid tempo and is peppered with an occasional spoken part; beginning and ending with sound samples of singing. I think that some songs are stronger than others, and at times it falls into the mediocrity of the genre, but a rare record does not. This is a solid release, and is definitely worth checking out. It is the first release from Outlast Records, and I am looking forward to the next. JUG

Outlast Records; P.O. Box 613; 29080 Malaga; SPAIN

Voice of Regret "Open Eyes" CD: Uh oh, it starts with a sample (albeit in German), and then when the simple chunky hardcore comes in (introduced by a bass that doesn't have a very powerful sound, I might add) the singer

Suicide Nation "7": This came out of fucking nowhere to destroy everything in its path. It opens with the most dramatic ten seconds I can remember hearing: the guitars come in, double-picking beautiful, murderous chords, and then the double bass explodes, more puncturing than a freight train passing overhead, more continuous than any volley of bullets from a machine gun, as momentous as anything on the Systral "Fever" record. It's one of those moments on a record that makes you sit in front of the turntable for an hour, lifting and replacing the needle over and over, still unable to absorb the entirety of its magnificence after one hundred tries. I see Suicide Nation as one of the few bands to take up Gehenna's bitter art, mixing more black metal into the already black misery and violence of Gehenna's work, following their footprints out into the wasteland. They juxtapose sandblasting blastbeats with melodies of wrecked and awful splendor to inflict maximum physical and emotional pain. The rough production is an important part of the witchcraft here. The double bass is at such a deeper frequency than the ragged, threadbare guitars that whenever it hits everything rumbles like an earthquake, the low vocal levels just make the growling, roaring vocals seem less human, and the lack of clarity in the mix itself just makes the whole assault more overwhelming, more difficult to grasp and pin down. Occasionally I can't tell if the guitars are entirely in time with the drums, but I don't fucking care at all, and neither will you. —b

Caught Red Handed, P.O. Box 3952, Orange, CA 92857-0952

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yells "yeeeah." This is generally simple hardcore with a few faster parts, lots of chunky stuff, and the guitars mixed far too low beneath the drums and bass. The singer yells, speaks a little, occasionally receives help from that shouting backup chorus we all know so well, generally doesn't do anything to set himself apart from the crowd. The riffs aren't original at all, they're generic enough that I can't even pin down influences. So this is pretty lackluster in general, yes. I do like their record label's name, I think it's awesome. And it's cool that the singer gets to list his instrument as "voice of regret" next to "guitar" and "drums." —b

Fat For Life Records, Vjekoslav Kolenda, Gen. Guisan-str. 29, CH-6300 Zug, Switzerland

Wallside "From the Sky": Ten songs at 27:38. Screams from the depths of the singer's guts like the desperate cries of a dying man...chaotic music with enough cohesion to make it flow from part to part with a degree of poetry. Ten songs which sound pretty much the same, musically and vocally. Lyrically, I am lost. Maybe I don't interpret poetry well, but nothing here makes much sense to me above and beyond the sound of the screams themselves. That is really frustrating and makes this record difficult to get into. Okay as background music if you are into noise with occasional jazzy bits and flowing melodic distortion, but dull and frustrating when I try to interpret who they are or why they have taken the time to form this band. I will call it "personal lyrics", which is oftentimes another way to say "confusing emotive poetry", which isn't necessarily bad, but is rarely extraordinary. Cynthia, making a surprise reviewer appearance for this CD, just walked in and said "He's got this insane little voice." True, so very true...a solid voice though, and fans of noisy HC will be really into this. JUG and C'IA

Makoto Recordings; P.O. Box 504031; Kalamazoo MI 49005; makotorec@hotmail.com

Beyond Description/Detestation split 10":

This is the best looking Wicked Witch record yet, the black, white and yellow cover with the punk art (Japanese and American punk skeletons beating each other with guitars) looks gorgeous! And it's a good record, too, the sort of record that even if you don't listen to it every day, you're glad you have it. Beyond Description play punk rock, yes they sure do, fast, noisy, simple riffs, raw-throated yelling vocals, occasional group choruses, adrenaline and formula to spare. They're not doing anything new, sure, but it's still great to listen to, and somehow being Japanese helps (here's some great Japanese English for you: the entire lyrics to one song are "confusion, chaos of shits"). There's an obvious fuck up in one song when the bass brings in the next riff by itself and flubs a few strokes, but that just proves that this is real punk rock. I didn't really get into Detestation bearing the Nausea banner forward on their CD, but a record like this is somehow a better context for them (you know, big vinyl, punk layout, foreign release, etc.) so I was able to stop hoping for innovation and just enjoy their speedy, dirty punk. And wait, hold on, there's a part in one song where everything stops but one guitar doing a spooky triple-chink part by itself, that hasn't been overdone yet (in this genre, at least), and it's a high point for them on this record. The intro the fourth song is a welcome moment of restraint and tension, too. For the most part, I agree with their lyrics (how could I not, they being the typical anarcho-punk anti-capitalist/religion/homophobia fare) without finding them especially interesting, although I do like the words to "Tempest," a prayer to mother earth to bring destruction upon her exploiters and ruiners that rises to a dramatic, bloody conclusion. If the

band would dare to leave the verse/chorus crust formula behind for a song, they could have made that an anthem of real power by building the music to the same frenzied crescendo that the lyrics reach. Oh well. I still enjoy having this record, looking at it at least as much as listening to it. —b

Wicked Witch, P.O. Box 3835, 1001 AP Amsterdam, Netherlands

Burning Inside/Dawncore split 7": I love this 7". I love Dawncore's side, and I'm a bit perplexed by that, because this is exactly the traditional NYC-style tough hardcore that I'm fed up with everyone else playing. Somehow here it's fresh and exciting, maybe it's just that I know the band and when I've

seen them play they've been completely open and emotional and going all out, but if this music wasn't good on its own I don't think I would be able to enjoy it as much as I am. It helps that their recording is so fucking good: everything sounds crystal clear, powerful, heavy, it makes all their fast parts and pounding mosh parts really work. I love the Burning Inside songs too, which is a little less strange, since they're a little more varied in the writing and styles. They tend to play faster, they throw in rhythms and leads that I haven't heard in hardcore like this before (the second song has a part that sounds like it was adapted from American rock from the 1960's, not unlike some of Jane's Addiction's better moments), they have more unexpected transitions. At the same time, this is music you could mosh to, music you might have a hard time *not* moshing to, in fact, if you like to mosh at all, and it's super catchy too. Their recording isn't quite as clear and forceful, but their songs have enough raw energy that this can't hold them back. They can do the same group chants at the choruses that hardcore bands have done for almost two decades, and it somehow works, it doesn't seem tired at all but actually evokes the feelings of community and love that those group vocal parts were originally meant to. That same feeling of community is there for me in both bands' thanks lists, too, which are all fellow Hungarian bands, even though these kids know enough Western bands that they could easily have used the

Undying "This Day All Gods Die CD: We're going to skip the first track, a keyboard intro that starts out haunting but doesn't go far enough to avoid being wandering and repetitive. Giving Undying the benefit of that doubt, this recording starts with the old gods dancing across the clouds, hurling thunderbolts down upon the hapless mortals below... in their best moments, they reach that transcendence, to no longer be making mere music but to be evoking powerful images and archetypes. They're a deathmetal band, yes, but their timeless melodies and excellent arrangements often take them to much greater, more fundamental places than that. They have a strong grasp of songwriting in general, lots of great transitions, they rarely go on too long... the only low moments come when they aren't trying to do any of their unique melodies and find themselves just playing typical low-e string riffs to go behind the roaring vocals. The lyrics speak almost exclusively from the position of the self-exiled eco-warrior, a perspective which has the drama and romance to sustain them through this record but probably would wear as flat as most single-issue lyrics do on a second record. Their inclusion of a detailed statement-of-purpose essay reflects very well on them. So for their next record, they need to broaden their subject matter a bit, keep tightening their musical vision, and go to the kind of ultra-fancy metal studio that can really flatter this kind of music. In the meantime, this record, even with its various first-record inconsistencies, is pretty fucking great.

—b

Fifth Column Conspiracy, P.O. Box 10461, Greensboro, NC 27404

thanks lists to show off their networking and connections. Both bands' lyrics reflect similar values and beliefs, it's reassuring to read them and feel like there are still hardcore scenes where a premium is put on togetherness. There's a great moment after the first Burning Inside song, I guess it's a recording of a guy laughing in the studio after something went wrong... I'm usually just annoyed by things like that on records, but this guy's laugh is so open and infectious that I was laughing along soon too, it was awesome. —b

Zoltan Jakab, 2120 Dunakeszi, Rozmaring u. 30, Hungary

Bred on Deception/Purgatoria split 7": B. on D. has one of the most unusual-sounding punk recordings I've ever heard. It's grindcore played on without guitars just a bass, that sounds something like the badly distorted guitars on the Minor Threat record, weird as fuck... the vocals (alternating the deep grunts and high shrieking of all grindcore bands, the only predictable thing here at all) are so much louder than the rest of the instruments that it's almost like they're not there, especially in the first song, and you can't really hear if there is a drummer or just a rustling noise in the background. The first song has a break in the middle filled with alien laughter, and finishes with a scream that is cut off before it ends. There's a weird circus music interlude with lounge singing in the second song, what the fuck! This wins first place for pure weirdness this issue. The songs are entitled "America the Beautiful" (chorus: "this country is being run by the one percent ruling class all for profit and power, it's time we kick their ass"), "Anarchism Is Progress,"

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"Transnational Propaganda," and "Why I Want To Hit People." This side of

the record might make it worth it for record collectors, for sheer weirdness quotient alone. Purgatoria is more traditional mediocre grindcore, much better mix, though the drums are still a bit quiet. I wish they'd included their lyrics, since their last song (of seven) is called "fag bashing black metal." Hmm, I wonder if B. on D. wants to sound like a normal bad grindcore band, or if they have a crazy aesthetic of their own with which they've come to destroy music as we know it? —b

write B. on D. yourselves, at Pentagrama, 13023 Kagel Cyn., Pacoima, CA 91331

Endstand/Aurinkokerho split CD: Lots of great music coming out of Finland this year, and Endstand is one of the best. They play fast, simple, straight to the point hardcore that somehow really works, thanks to the urgency and new slant on these old U.S. traditions (circa Gorilla Biscuits) that their Finnish perspective offers... Intensity and very, very few other bands today are doing this with equal success. These songs all have the boundless energy of, say, old Uniform Choice, and the singer's obvious anger adds a sharpness to them—which is given further depth when the slightly mournful, major key guitar leads come in in the background, offering an element of regret to his rage about (song 1) overzealous vegan militants (song 2) "king of the scene" hardcore kids... lyrics: "more hardcore than you... yeah, you fucking rule" and (song 3) the European Union: a "United States of Europe," he alleges, not without reason, claiming that whatever little democratic power still remains in the hands of the people in the smaller countries will soon be gone as they melt into one huge, faceless mass like the U.S.A. Aurinkokerho starts with a short instrumental intro, ending with a strange, apocalyptic noise that I'm damned if I can recognize. That's my favorite part of their music, after that they play simple three chord punk rock, with sweetly sung vocals—not poppy shit like some labels sell like pigswill in the U.S.A., but still not as exciting to me as Endstand. —b

Endstand, P.O. Box 65, 11101 Riihimäki, Finland

Excrement of War/Deformed Conscience split 12": The labels are on the wrong sides of the record, so I was confused for a second, but now I've figured out what's going on and I can tell you: Deformed Conscience is fucking awesome, the pick of the litter of the late-comer crust bands. So many of them lack the real pissed off fury that it takes to make this stuff work, but not D.C. It shows here from the first instant of the record, when they come in immedi-

ately playing the blues lead over the riff that Discharge used to save for the

climaxes of their songs. It shows in the unrelenting vocals, filled with passion and anger, never tired. It shows at the end of one song when they just make noise and bang out drum rolls for a minute, with no regard for anything but being loud and mad, before finishing the music off. And it shows too in their songwriting, too, I suppose, which is as tight and to-the-point as their playing. Now that I'm deep into their side, I've noticed that their drummer does a lot of rolls—that really keeps things going for me, more power to him. And their lyrics are nice and specific: fuck McDonalds, fuck everyone who works with major labels, fuck capitalist wars over oil, fuck apathetic bastards, and fuck you if you're in the service of any of the motherfuckers. And fuck, it turns out I like Excrement of War just as much! My friend Andy, who comes from the hardcore scene and doesn't know much about the grimy, bitter glory of crust, was telling me how much he likes the De-testation CD. I should make him get this record. E. of W.'s singer is at least as into it as D.C.'s, she has a great deep screaming voice, and the band behind her has all the energy they need too—and, oh fuck, they just went into an '80's blues metal solo over the verse riff! Fuck yeah! —b

Fired Up records, in Minneapolis; I think it's done by somebody from Profane Existence—and this is a fucking shame, but their address isn't on the record, and I can't find it anywhere else! Try contacting Profane E.

Handful of Dust/Song of Kerman split 7": It's the final days of putting Inside

Front together, and I'm looking for any excuse to be able to skip reviewing these last records, but I couldn't skip this one, because it matters. Handful of Dust is amazing, unlike anything else I've heard come from the hardcore community ever. They use keyboards, but not like other bands—their keyboard is a central part of their music, and their keyboardist is not only skilled at his instrument but actually an original player and composer. At points in the beginnings and quiet parts of songs, he's playing the haunting steady tones that the Amebix would have used if they could have afforded half decent equipment; other times, he interjects sudden jolts of static, other unexpected sounds to add crazy hallucination textures to the vicious and unpredictable metal music, even samples that interact in terrifying ways with the vocals. Hell, the vocalists too are doing stuff I haven't heard before: they use high, droning singing, interspersed with metal shrieking and

speaking parts, all expertly executed, to take this record to places we haven't

A.W.O.L./Headway split 7": I was excited to hear Headway here, they are one of the few hardcore bands right now that really conceive of themselves as artists and try to express themselves and expand the medium accordingly. Their singer has developed a unique style, in which he alternates between some of the harshest, most acidic shrieks I've ever heard and mournful banshee wails more shockingly personal than any other singer would dare venture in public. The band explore strange, broken melodies, following hypnotic, ever-changing guitar lines as if they were grooves, occasionally building up to explosive transitions; the final product is stark, abrasive, bleeding emotion, like sleepless mornings in tears when your idols and illusions come crashing down. There's a jazz sensibility to their music, in that it never repeats itself but is made up rather of infinite improvisations on themes, and it even comes off in the studio—it still sounds like they are performing, rather than recording, here. The lyrics, too, are pure poetry, ghostly and feverish, desirous and despairing. The AWOL side has more in common with the mainstream of French metallic hardcore that bands like Stormcore set the precedent for. They begin with an acoustic part alternated with distorted guitar chunks, and then go into a series of well-arranged mosh metal riffs. But before you think they're just another tough guy hardcore band: their singer works magic to set them apart. His screaming style has a lot more in common with Julien from Headway than with the guy from Madball or some other macho boy trapped in the cage of his own gender limitations, and this makes their metal/hardcore emotional, makes it important, makes it really work and matter. When they get going just past the middle of the song, playing a fast metal riff (something like Metallica did in their best days, only with the production of a French hardcore band, if you can imagine), and then pull out the speed so the riff continues over half-tempo, pounding drums, as the singer rips his throat out and brandishes it at us, I'm shuddering in amazement. From there I'm locked in, and their music does exactly what the best metallic hardcore of this decade has done (early Integrity, definitely Starkweather) with fury and poignancy and pain. Altogether, their song is at least as good as the Headway song, and this is a top notch 7". —b

Mosh Bart, 28 Rue Du Puits Mauger, 35000 Rennes, France

Headway live in Montpellier, June 1998: Headway is the only band I've ever seen dare to do an Acme cover, and better yet, pull it off. They poured so much soul, so much raw angst into their performance, that it hurt to watch, it tightened up all my muscles until I shuddered as I stood. They ran all their songs together in one long improvisation, the violence of emotion ebbing and flowing with the orchestration of the music, the singer sometimes taking out his saxophone during the quieter moments to really take us somewhere else, and then as the intensity built again kneeling upon the stage, one arm bent as far behind his back as it could go, every tendon strained to push out the bitterest screams, to squeeze his whole being out of his body and into the air, hanging in long shrieks around us, so personal that we almost felt as if we should not be there to see it. The rest of the band, too, screamed, into the air, oblivious to and disinterested in the microphones, not trying to capture and save up that emotion, to present it nicely, but just to push it out, to flood the world with so much of it that amplification would never matter again.

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seen hardcore bands go (yes, metal bands, but not hardcore bands... assuming H. of D. is a hardcore band). And H. of D. uses some of the broadest-ranging dynamics I've heard, going back and forth between starkly quiet parts and violent, frightening metal madness. Their lyrics are abstract in that "scary" metal way, nothing unusual there. Song of Kerman get some jumpy Neurosis (circa "Enemy of the Sun") fast grooves going on, with the bass and toms leading, at the best moments of their first song. The screaming vocals aren't quite as all-out as I'd like to hear, but they're almost there I guess. The other song is an artsy, not entirely successful experiment with nerve-grating feedback, pretty piano, and a reading/speaking part (a piece of a William Lloyd Garrison essay, "intelligent wickedness," addressing the oppression of women by men). The lyrics to the first song seem to have been taken from a poem by Laura Otten, and there's a generally feminist leaning to their whole project here, which is nice to see from hardcore boys. —b

Moo Cow, P.O. box 616, Madison, WI 53701

Indecision/Knuckledust split CD: I imagine this is one of the last recordings of the old Indecision since they have now finally joined once and for all with Milhouse. If you haven't heard the old Indecision's brand of straightforward late '90's hardcore, you're probably still doing OK, although they have achieved a lot of popularity just for being an honest, hardworking band with catchy choruses and their heads in the right place. Their second song here is a cover of the Cure's immortal fluffsong "Just Like Heaven," in which they actually use an organ and guitar lead tones something like the original... I'm not sure if it works, since the singer is still doing his high screeching thing, and since they're *not* going to be the Cure doing this song, no matter how hard they try, they might as well resolve themselves to being Indecision playing the song, that might work better. The drummer does the best job in this song as far as that goes, his doubletime punk beats work great in the song. Their other three songs here are from a live radio show in New York, they don't sound bad at all, and they start pretty well: "INDECISION!!!" yells the announcer, and someone in the band audibly says "dork!" before they start playing. Knuckledust makes a good partner for Indecision, they're doing the same general thing with their music—fast, simple riffs with chunky parts, yelling (non-metal) vocals—with somewhat more energy than Indecision, too, I think. They benefit from more speed, a vocalist who not only sounds worked up but has the vocal strength to back it up, good samples, and a CRASS cover that they play as if it is their own (in contrast to Indecision's daring but not entirely successful experiment earlier). —b

Household Name, address everywhere you look

Jane/Shaft "Chorus of Doom" split CD: Jane begins with an acoustic guitar part (with a rhythm and lead, no less) embellished by a sample in German. The music comes in soon enough, modern German hardcore (that is, metallic, fairly fast, a guy screaming in a deep torn-throated voice) with occasional double bass, chunky riffs, nothing brand new but smoothly executed enough and with a good enough recording. The second song contains their contribution to broadening the horizons of hardcore: a quieter part, with a trained singer doing her thing in the foreground (and their screamer still doing his thing somewhat unnecessarily in the background). She's really good, really beautiful voice, and had her work been better integrated into Jane's music this would have been something really special. At points Jane sounds more

influenced by Belgian "edgemetal" than the German Per Koro crazy hardcore stuff, if that means anything to you. OK, now Shaft: they're playing in the same vein as their CD-mates, the differences being more raw immediacy in their recording (although the vocals are too loud...), deeper, possibly more distinctive vocals, and less complexity in the songwriting (no fancy acoustic parts, for example, and much less double bass). They have a rough, grainy, sandblasting guitar sound going for them, but they're a little less polished all around than Jane and it holds them back. A blastbeat part in their second song is the only thing that ultimately rescues it from being forgettable, and their third song has no such saving grace.

It's not really central to this CD, but it's worth pointing out that the layout here is absolutely terrible, you can read everything but the band photographs and back-grounds are so badly put together they make me not want to even look at the lyrics. —b

Alveran, P.O. Box 100152, 44701 Bochum, Germany

Kilara/Hellchild split CD: Here's an announcement for the music world: the track listing on this CD is fucked up (how do you screw something like that up?), and it's actually Hellchild whose songs are first. That should resolve some confusion. I haven't encountered Hellchild before, but they live up to their name here, playing a pounding, hypnotizing groove punctuated by enough weird stuff (a heavy metal solo in the background during the first song, a part where the guitarist messes with his on/off switch in the second song, a skillful Venom cover for the third song) to keep it vital. Their singer has a really distinctive, really deep growling voice, and the recording itself is crushing. Now, Kilara. Their 7" was one of most intense records to come out in the last five years, and I thought their recordings sort of peaked with that. But I like this better than I liked their subsequent full length: it has some of the riotous energy and lack of restraint that made the 7" so dangerous. I think, in retrospect, the main problem was they just stopped playing fast enough. Their slow stuff on here (their third song) is heavy and powerful, scary, and it doesn't ever drag, but it lacks

the velocity to really run someone over. The second of their three songs is a traditional southern acoustic ballad about the destruction wrought upon their homeland by industrial progress, they're even whooping in the background at the end, good for them. Let me talk about the layout of this CD for a second: it has very little to do with the bands, centering almost entirely on reproductions of some photographs of a church made out of bones in the Czech city of Kutna Hora. It turns out at the end that the photos are actually "available for purchase" (a mere \$75 for ten prints, it reads in a boldface print, so we consumers won't be able to make any mistakes) and "suitable for framing," which I think is pretty tacky. It's just funny to me how worked up Americans get when they come across something as foreign to them as bones. I've been to the church in question, it's interesting enough, but it's hilarious how adolescent we Westerners act when confronted with something (like mortality) that our culture fails to address. Every black metal band in Eastern Europe has had their fucking picture taken in this church, and my impression was that at this point everyone there regards the church as pretty trite. But death is still a commodity in the USA, so buy away, buy away. —b

Rhetoric, P.O. Box 82, Madison, WI 53701

Morning Again/25 ta Life split CD promo(?): A three song, 7:59 second CD? I was skeptical at first, but this disc actually surprised me. This is a Good

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Life promo, and if you can look beyond the fact that the only real reason this record exists is to sell you something, you will find some interesting stuff. The Morning Again song (that's right - song) is relatively standard Morning

Again music (Unbroken with Slayer influences), but with substantial lyrics: "insecurity becomes overwhelming / as a nation goes under the knife / to carve away a mirror's reflection / I'm not your billboard lie". One song though?!? It was the 25 ta Life songs (that's right...songs...TWO of them! Whoa...) that really surprised me. This was a totally new direction for these guys, musically. The vocals are higher pitched and nasal sounding, like those found in Redemption '87, and the music itself is like mid eighties NYHC along the lines of Side By Side. Whatever you can imagine 25 ta Life to sound like, just throw those preconceptions out the window in terms of the music. Lyrically, they once again discuss hardcore pride, and unity, and staying together ("Don't be afraid, take control / Get involved in da scene / Hardcore unity, the spirit remains"). I loved their two songs, and just to prove to myself that it wasn't just my ear failing after hours of demo reviewing, I played them for others who thought too that the songs were interesting for 25 ta Life. I guess the one question I have about this CD comes in the word choices used in the quote I just printed from 25 ta Life. Now, I know that I grew up in Connecticut, and not on the streets of NYC, but I have to wonder, why is the word "da" used to replace "the" in the line "get involved in da scene" but then not in the next line, "Hardcore unity, the spirit remains"? I am confused here. Should the word not be replaced here as well? Or possibly, perhaps the two different usages of "da" imply that the word "the" has different meaning when used in each of these sentences. I will ponder this one and get back to you sometime... JUG Good Life, P.O. Box 114, 8500 Kortrijk, Belgium

Motherfucking Titty Suckers/46 Short split 7": The M.F.T.S. songs sound like early Circle Jerks to me, maybe, only rougher sounding, less distorted guitars, less straight punk songwriting, and... a lot funnier! These are songs about being a post office kid, you know, those teenage lost punk kids that hang out in from of the post office downtown in every city across America: the first one is about how the kid's dad doesn't like to listen to G.G. Allin records, the next about being in love with a girl who is just using you for drugs, then about smoking dope, and trying to get laid by girls who aren't interested... and at the end, you hear the singer (who sounds stoned, drunk and lost through all the mumbled lyrics) say "alright, that's good enough, man." The fucked up thing is that these songs are actually catchy, as is the band's fuck-all attitude. It's almost as if they're not post office kids after all, but more experienced musicians pulling one over on us... 46 Short sound like old Black Flag, maybe. I was having a hard time imagining any other band sounding right on the flipside of those M.F.T.S. classics,

but they do OK. The singer does that speaking instead of screaming thing some early '80's bands could get away with, and for me the high point comes at the end of their second and last song when another guy joins in with him actually screaming. —b

Caught Red Handed, address coming soon to a theater near you

Opstand/Spazz split 7": Occasionally when everything else stops and a guitar leads off by itself, I feel like it's the 1980's again and start to smile... but for the entire rest of their side of this record, I was wondering what the fuck everybody sees in Spazz. I've heard so many other bands play this fast old-style hardcore/grind stuff better... their heroes Larm (in whose honor they've written a song called "Wooden Shoes," a not particularly enlightened glorification of stereotypes about Holland... and Dutch hardcore), of course, or Opstand, for that matter. Or maybe I'm just prejudiced because Spazz sings about stupid shit like cutting your hair off when you start to go bald ("Scalpfarmer: Scalp of Strength/Shaved till (sic) Death") and Opstand's lyrics are well-thought out and address real-life political issues. I mean, there's definitely a place for fun and satire and even frivolity in hardcore, but it has to actually be clever, and I don't think Spazz is on this record... so I'd much rather be reading Opstand's essays about racist scapegoating in France and the connections between domestic violence and hierarchy/power dynamics in our society, and listening to their furious shrieking hyperspeed grind, than listening to Spazz's fairly lackluster take on the same style and looking at the picture of Donald fucking Duck on their side of the insert. At least they know and respect the European heritage of the music they play... And, the packaging: although neither band did a very aesthetically pleasing job on their insert layouts, the cover (that Coalition must have designed) looks gorgeous. —b

Coalition, P.O. Box 243, 6500 AE Nijmegen, Netherlands
Simulcast/Talitha Cumi split 7": My favorite thing about this record is the packaging: the band names are actually typed on the otherwise blank cover with an old-fashioned black- and red-ink typewriter, and there's an envelope glued inside with a message written on it by hand, as if it is a personal letter from the band to the listener. The overwrought letter inside begins "Lieber Musikfreund," (beloved music friend, if my poor German serves me), and goes on to (eventually) talk about social conditioning, etc. Talitha Cumi has a slightly gentler, smoother-textured take on the screaming German hardcore style than

most of the bands I've heard from there this issue. Their second song begins with a long, possibly emo-influenced intro, quieter and with more emphasis on melody and texture than when the chunks and screaming come in. They're going to be hard-pressed to stick out from today's crowds of good German hardcore bands, but they're accomplished and comfortable with what they're doing. Simulcast starts out with real emo music, undistorted guitar melodies

Morser/The Swarm (aka Knee Deep in the Dead) split 7": Let's face it, Morser isn't the highest content band around, but we all love them because their music rocks so hard, because they can do things no other band would dare or dream of doing, because, when it gets down to it, they're so much fucking fun to listen to! I just have to give you the blow-by-blow on their songs, because they're so fucking awesome. They start the first song with a volley of machine gunfire alternating with a metal melody (of course), then come in with full continuous double bass, and then everything drops out but the lead guitar playing a repeating metal refrain. One of their (notoriously four) singers holds out a shriek behind it for a full four measures until everything explodes at once again, the machine shifting gears back and forth between blastbeat and fastbeat as it crosses and crisscrosses the landscape, reducing every tree and flower to wreckage. The next part is even more anthemic, a slow, mournful melody on the grizzled bass guitar, and then everything joins in and it is the finale of an opera about the end of the world, the guitarist not content to be merely making unbelievable music but pushing it even further by adding slides on his guitar in places hardcore has never seen them before. The second song features a part where they revolutionize metal/hardcore musical arrangements by using a note on the bass guitar in place of what would normally be a harmonic on the lead guitar: chunkchunkchunkchunk-bass note, chunkchunkchunkchunk-bass note, fucking awesome. And at the end of their side, they build to a final climax, the draconian death roars of their singers rising over the concluding funeral march guitar chunks before they plunge into the abyss. This is music that should be played by classical orchestras, the conductor stabbing the air with sweeping gestures of his arms, the prim and polished audience rioting, beating each other with their fucking folding chairs. The Swarm are awesome too, more topical lyrically than the shamelessly vapid Morser with their metal nonsense, raging here about the right to die ("...but your morality does not eat cancer!"), those terrifying moments when everything seems meaningless, and having your life gobbled up by your job. And musically, they actually make a good match for Morser, to my amazement. They use some of the same metal leads and transitions from blasting parts to pounding parts, but they also have a more old-fashioned punk energy in their fast parts that Morser, with all their heavy metal precision, could never capture. The verse riff in their second song sounds like it could have been written by any of the fastest and most inconsiderate punk bands of the '80's. The packaging is gorgeous, abstract and dignified, as well-befits a record like this that is bound to be a legend in its own time. —b

Spiritfall, 215 Hancock Avenue, Bridgewater, NJ 08807 or Per Koro, address everywhere you go

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and spoken vocals, before powerful guitar chunks I'd expected come in, and then, oh fuck, they do something crazy and new! The guitars quit the low register entirely, double-picking a riff at the tops of the highest strings on the guitar. The rest of their music, though it's filled with the same old chunks and screaming, also incorporates new ideas, unexpected arrangements and combinations of musical conventions that don't usually cross paths. Their second song is like a heavy emo song, with singing in the foreground, screaming behind it at the high points, and hardcore-distorted guitars playing pretty chord progressions. It's actually quite good, almost catchy, not new in the world of emo songwriting but delivered in a way I haven't heard before. —b

Strikeforce Diablo / Twelve Hour Turn ^{***}
7": Really nice, two songs from each band. To start, they have the most creative approach I have seen in a long while to the "Side A / Side B" alternative which has been tradition for year in punk. There is a photo of a guy driving a powerboat on the label side A (I assume) and a different guy on side B (there are no words, just the color photos of each man, one to a side. The guy on one side has a shirt on, and the other guy doesn't. On the lyric sheet, the Twelve Hour Turn side is called "Shirts" and the flipside of the sheet is for "Strikeforce Diablo" and is labeled "Skins". Ok...onto the music. Shirts side first with Twelve Hour Turn. Think about the constantly changing intensity of Seattle chaos/noise kings Botch, and mix that sort of hardcore with the emotionally charged mid tempo melodic to slow stylings of a Seven Storey Mountain. This is lyrically strong. The first song "A Letter To My Uncle" is a poem about the writer's uncle, who has apparently suffered a stroke. Really human, heart felt, and desperately emotive with music which comes close to matching the feeling of the words. The Strikeforce Diablo side is a bit different, bit still in the vein of the melodic. It is darker, a bit heavier and more driving, with less potent lyrics, but better music than the first side. The only drawback is the packaging, which is basically a plain white cardstock sleeve. I would have liked to have the sleeve match the music in feeling...plain white doesn't cut it considering some of the subject matter here. JUG

Push Pull Records; P.O.Box 471 Allston MA 02134

"The Caligula Effect" CD compilation: The first song, by Encyclopedia of American Traitors (a band I'd unfortunately missed until now), is awesome: it's a noisy epic the struggle between labor and capital, complete with wild, shrieking vocals. The second song is by a defunct Virginia band, Nit-Pic, with nasally vocals and rough production and delivery. That's followed by a more '90's metal/screaming hardcore song by Canephora complete with samples galore. Bessemer Process is on here, they were one of my favorite bands last issue for the absurd lyrics on their 7" (here they're featured with one of the hits from that 7", specifically the one in which the singer announces "broccoli can cure every disease but you still won't get me to eat my greens"). Oh god, and then it's melodramatic emo with those unbearable melodramatic emo vocals, courtesy of Madison... their guitar melodies aren't bad during the rock out parts, but the rest of it is pretty hard on my ears. Their lyric sheet includes an un-explanation of the song, including such gems of insight as "Maybe someday the writer will understand what his heart has poured into

this song." Enemy Soil seems to have recorded their grindcore song decently enough and then put a layer of static over the whole thing out of sheer perversity. And then we reach the point on the compilation where everything starts to blur together. After this point, the only songs that grabbed me were by December (noisy, groovy, rugged metalcore with a doubletime part at the end and deep, tough-sounding vocals), Carlisle (they started out totally emo acoustic, but when the song proper came in it was screamy, trebly chaos), Hand of God (they have a good song about not buying corporate soda), Bear Witness (whose metal/hardcore song is more polished than most of

the material on here), Manual 7 (with more pure energy than most of the other bands on here, which is more important than being polished... their song here is the last one on their 7" reviewed above), and Reversal of Man (with an apparently previously-released song that starts out a lot more emo and melodic than I'd expected, before unleashing their discord and disorder upon us). The bands I haven't mentioned already are Fuse 12, I Bleed For This? (who have a catchy harmonic riff going for them, at least), Amalgamation, Built In Enemy, 12 Hour Turn, and Stillguard (the standard-issue generic "old school" hardcore band for this compilation); some of them weren't so bad, you might be able to get something out of them, who knows. Overall, this is a decent introduction to a bunch of d.i.y. hardcore bands in and around the screamy/noisy genre, there's a lot of mediocrity here and a few good songs; the drawback of compilations like this is that it can be really tough to sort the good stuff out from the bad. It's important to note that this is a \$4 CD compilation that was *not* released by a record label to promote its own bands (or by a 'zine to promote the bands of the labels that advertise in it), that's fucking awesome. Hey—I thought I was done reviewing this, but the very last band, Pigdestroyer, is a grind band with more vigor and viciousness (and a better recording) than anyone else on this 60 minute CD. So if you get this CD, get it for the first and last of its nineteen songs. —b

Catechism, 3512 Carson Drive, Woodbridge, PA 22913

Erie Hardcore Scene Report compilation CD: A substantial documentation of the Erie/Lake Effect hardcore scene, brought to you by Mike Ski, tattoo artist extraordinaire and singing virtuoso of Brother's Keeper. Nine different bands:

Brother's Keeper (the second best tracks on the disc in my opinion, showing a different side of the current sound: more stomp and deeper vocals); Dis-ciple (current Brother's Keeper-ish, but not a clone by any means); Abnegation (death metal with lyrics about burning churches and killing priests); Neverfall (good recording quality showing through here...I liked the bass sound). Other bands include: Digression, Mothership (moronic Christian hardcore with lyrics in one song identifying "my strength is all I need to keep me alive" followed in the next song by "Jesus died so we might have life/he will take away all your strife"...is this a joke band??? Take away all my strife? You dumb fucks, I want my strife and suffering. Only in a delusion inspired utopia would we find a world in denial of pain. I not only disagree with you, but I find you and your entire breed of misguided sheep in denial of life and enemies to the collective human consciousness); Out of Hand; Breakiron; and the best tracks on the record: from Sumthin' to Prove (Idiotic

Rubbish Heap/Upset split 7": "Jesus Christ forgave the bastards," begins the cracking, unhinged voice of the introductory sample, "but I can't. I hate you, I hate your nation, and I hate your people! And I fucked your sons and daughters because they're pigs." The throbbing toms and gut-level guitars come in, and my spine shivers, my blood curdles, my pupils dilate, for he is speaking the unspeakable words of my own shameful, incommunicable hatred, my own pariah's impotent rage and violence, and I want to break my silence for once, slaughter the well-born, burn down buildings, write my heartbreak and disappointment upon the world in blood and fire. The screamer comes in with the beat, with no mercy for us oversensitive brutes: "You will die alone. Still you hesitate to fill this empty space." Everything I have ever loved, everything I tried to fill that space with, has been torn, shredded before my crying eyes and clenching fists, like flesh on hopeless wrists, and it is with bitter accord that I nod as he screams "You are nothing in their eyes. Burn, burn their eyes." I can't even get through the song because I keep going back to that remorseless beginning. That's Rubbish Heap. If I have to speak of their music without letting my heart trip up my tongue, I'll say they could play with Systral and His Hero Is Gone without palling in comparison. Their music covers that same territory. Upset doesn't transcend mere music to play pure emotion in the way that Rubbish Heap does, but they make some great fucking music themselves, with more unusual flourishes and dynamic parts than Rubbish Heap. They're similar stylistically, working near the forefront of the great, brutal hardcore movement that has come out of Western Europe in the last half decade. They have the chaotic midtempo parts with guitar chunks and the occasional harmonics, but they also use some less conventional rhythms, and they know how to pull back into quiet, eerie parts putrid with understated threat, danger, menace... and their lyrics are soulful, too, the first line is: "have you ever loved, unconditionally?" —b
Conspiracy, an awesome fucking label, address under another rave review nearby

about strikes and

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moshcore with some of the...um...uh...best...no wait...worst lyrics in history: "you're goin' out just like a bitch, so take your whack new jack ass back to school motherfucker 'cause you just got beat, comin' up short of six feet deep". Comedy...with Mike Ski providing the beat downs. Overall, a good account of this part of the country expressed through demo and older tracks from some bands you might not have heard otherwise. Packaging is a glossy cardboard sleeve with a little booklet inside. JUG

SA MOB; P.O. Box 1931 Erie PA 16507-0931

"In This Other Land" double CD compilation of French Hardcore: Wow, a double fucking CD! This is a great way to be introduced to France's often overlooked hardcore scene, which really does have some great bands in it. The press-pack-style introductions to the bands might seem a little strange, but Overcome is no Epitaph records, I just think something got lost in the translation. The first CD begins with AWOL, who are as captivating here as they were on their split with Headway, with their high, wild vocals, crazy metal (plenty of atmosphere and all), and skillful use of samples. Kickback follows with a version of Breakdown's song (their namesake), followed by "Paris' Most Wanted" by Diamond D. Their Breakdown cover isn't bad to listen to, but they should remember that pure machismo alone won't make for good music or art (it usually just interferes, of course). From there, Underground Society (more traditional polished metalcore stuff, influenced by Belgian bands like Congress I'd warrant, quite well done), Children (who begin with a Beethoven rip off, but otherwise are like a less polished Underground Society, perhaps, with less metal in the songwriting), Right For Life (significantly weaker production, simpler, more old-fashioned hardcore style, with Warzone-style yelling vocals), and Drowning (deathmetal/hardcore, with some promising moments but some wrinkles yet to iron out... and those emotionless metal grunting vocals have got to die off, already!) finish out the first CD. The Headway song at the beginning of the second CD is the same one that was on the Inside Front #11 CD. The amazing Headway are followed by Trapped In Life (who begin in absolutely Belgian metal fashion, every kickbox musical convention perfectly executed and repeated in the first twenty seconds of the first song...), Primal Age (it starts as European-styled "old school" hardcore with a lot of influence in the playing and singing from their more metal colleagues... but by the end of it, I'm thinking metallic modern hardcore with old school influences, hm), Seekers of the Truth (who are more obviously old-fashioned, with simpler riffs, yelling and gang vocals, and other holdovers from the days of Y.O.T. and the Cro-Mags), and Hang Up (more unusual, experimental hardcore, following

Headway's example, perhaps). The final band of the compilation is Stormcore, who became quite a skilled band near the end of their career, ushering in the metallic hardcore sound that so many French bands play now. —b

Overcome, P.O. Box 7548, 35 075 Rennes, Cedex 3, France

"Living Silent" CD compilation: There are three reasons to find this CD, and they are good reasons indeed: The first is Eyelid's incredible song, which I herald as an instant classic, the soundtrack for everything wild and passionate and rebellious I've done this year. In some respects, and this is one of the reasons this song is so incredible, this is the most cutting edge song I've heard from an American hardcore band in a long time: it sounds like these kids must be listening to European bands like Refused, and learning from them. The song begins and ends with a repeating guitar noise that underlines the tension between the music played live by the band and the noises produced by their echo pedals and electric equipment, awesome, and everything in between is revolutionary in terms of sound as well as content. The lyrics themselves are filled with the kind of irrational, romantic lust for destruction and creation ("the destructive urge is also a creative one") that makes my heart pound in my chest, makes me want to run out into the streets throwing rocks at policemen and kicking in bank windows, falling love with the wrong people and shoplifting and getting caught up in crazy crusades: "we want the world, and we want it on fire!" the vocalist screams at the beginning. He even ties their song playfully into the history of the rock genre, by playing with references to Jimi Hendrix ("Let me stand next to your fire"). This rocks, in the very best sense of the word, shakes up my world so much that I feel like it could shake up everyone else's too. The second reason to find this CD is the wonderful Milhouse song, a madman's nursery rhyme, a twenty-four second insult-to-injury assault, that attacks and disappears faster than a rabid rabbit. And god, to hear a song of real outrage, about a real human relationship that went sour, and that actually dares to be personally insulting (taking the emotions out of the "musical world" of playacting and putting them back here, in the real world, where they belong), oh, what a glorious thing! The third reason is the Unearthed song, which is remarkable for combining echoing, droning melodic vocals with abrasive hardcore music, it's really something new and challenging. Those three songs mean more to me than any of the songs on one hundred other CD's that came out this (dreadfully boring) year in hardcore. Indecision are also great here, though the Milhouse song does everything they're doing only better (appropriately, the two bands have now become one). The Surface song doesn't offer anything new musically, but I enjoy listening to it; and the Former Members of Alfonsin song, though musically nothing to write home about, has some really good lyrics (about greed and business among hardcore bands) going for it and feels really sincere to me. The other bands on here, who don't warrant much description, are Turnedown (melodramatic rock, ugh!), Midvale, Waxwing, A Sometimes Promise, Sharks Keep Moving (all jangly emo, devoid of feeling), Treadmill (rockin' hardcore stuff, uh huh), Defect (midtempo chunky hardcore with angry vocals), and Adamantium ('90's hardcore about betrayal, with distorted vocals, possibly something like Coalesce?). —b

Status, P.O. Box 1500, Thousand Oaks, CA 91358

"Kiss Me With Your Feet" A Documentation of the Westside Hardcore Scene 7" compilation: The cover of this 7" is hilarious, it uses 1960's images and packaging to cast the typical hardcore

7" comp in a completely different light. It makes this record more appealing, at least visually, which is good, since apart from that this is one of those local compilation records that good for the kids who know the bands but don't usually go much farther than that (I got #230 of 500). The first band, Appeal to Reason, starts with a really strange tempo change, unless it's just that my record keeps skipping... after that they play a simpler, less intense, sort of a beginners' German '90's hardcore (slow and fast parts, screaming, etc.) but dressed up by a few more unexpected changes. The second, Hakle Foicht, is much more straightforward and old-fashioned: the singer yells like '80's singers did, the band plays simple riffs with one-two-one-two fast drumming, and the one thing that sets them apart is the way the guitar pauses at totally unexpected moments while the rest of the band keeps going. The Amber song begins with the vocalist screaming by himself, and it's kind of touching how he runs out of air before he's finished, so he ends with a sort of gasp... a band like Coalesce would have done another take, lest their recording sound "imperfect," but it makes them sound more human that they left it as is. After that, Amber plays a sort of tough/German hardcore hybrid that has a multiple personality problem, they seem to be trying to do too many things in succession that don't seem to rationally fit together, to me at least. They have screaming NY tough guy parts, then guitar leads, singing parts, chunky mosh parts, a couple clumsy tempo changes, deep whispered vocals behind the lead at one point, followed by a simple speedy hardcore part, I'm totally disoriented at this point. And they didn't print their lyrics, which is too bad, since the first two bands' lyrics were quite good (A. to R. sings poetically about the struggle for life and passion in the dry, drab modern world, and H.F.'s song is a compelling anti-fascist statement). Pencilcase begins the second side with a crew shout: "West Side Hard Core!" They're playing older-fashioned hardcore too, although they don't sound anything like Youth of Today—their melo-

dies and rhythms are different—and their chorus is chunky with a harmonic in it. There's a place where everything stops but the guitar, which is punctuated at the beginning of each riff by the bass drum before the breakdown comes in (you know the hardcore tradition I'm talking about)... but their bass drum is

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produced so big and boomy that it sounds like a big kettle drum being hit with a mallet. Disease has a song that sounds for the most part like older Chokehold or some similar early '90's straightforward fast & slow chunk band, but there's a metal part in the middle (similar to the second Unbroken LP, or, better, Mean Season?) In which one guitar plays a repeating melody while the other strikes open chords for harmony. Loxiran are the heroes for me here, they have a twenty second track at the end which isn't listed on the cover: nothing but screaming, abrasive noise in two bursts. It's awesome! —b
Construct c/o Karsten C. Ronnenberg, Nizzaallee 77, 52072 Aachen, Germany

"Solidarity" benefit CD for ABC NO RIO: There are thirty six fucking tracks on here, so I'm just going to talk about the ones that stood out for me. The introductory song, an ABC NO RIO theme song by Plan A Project, starts with the most powerful sample I've heard in years, sounds of riots and a violently impassioned voiceover about taking your life back from the fucking machine. Submission Hold's song takes no prisoners in its assault on hardcore clichés, employing a flute and a variety of styles of vocal delivery in the struggle. Milhouse just might be the best band from New York in this decade, and their absolutely straight-faced Judge cover only supports my theory. Automaton still doesn't sound as heavy or clear here as I always thought they should, but I like their politicized progressive grindcore all the same. Also present are the Judas Iscariot, Boiling Man, Foundation, Wardance Orange, Devoid of Faith, Pisspoor, Lifeless Existence, and Fanshen (all playing aggressive dirty screaming hardcore stuff, and most of them quite well), Anal Sausage and Profits of Misery (horns rendering their already absurd punk music hilarious), the Degenerics, Dead Nation, Diskonto, Astronaut Catastrophe, Distraught, and Defiance (playing more rough, traditional punk... god, "traditional" punk, is that what we've come to?!), and then, for good measure (??), weird techno noise with absurd lyrics, like Skabs. And then there's other bands too, yeah, that's a lot. The final two are React (live at CBGB's) and Aus Rotten (playing an old Nausea song, with Neil from Tribal War singing, which I guess makes sense, since he sang for that band once upon a time). The Nausea cover is awesome: it's an overloaded live recording, but it has all the raw power of the very best punk, and you just can't beat Nausea, period! Anyway, the music is secondary here (although with so much of it everyone is bound to find something they like) to the message and the particular cause of keeping ABC functional for all of us... and so there's plenty of great reading material in the insert, a few different pieces offering histories and perspectives on ABC, including something by Chris from Slug and Lettuce. The articles are well-written and really educational, they make this worth it all by themselves. —b

Deadalive, Post Office Box 97, Caldwell, NJ 07006

BRIAN DINGLEDINE - post Equal Vision Records phone conversation voice mail message 11/16/98 - As is the case whenever Brian Dingleline encounters semi or full corporate rock and roll, I found myself today listening to a message from him on my machine. Brian's technique on this message is absolutely excellent. In true explosive fashion, he started off calm for the 'intro', if you will, in which he said "Greg? Its Brian...I just talked to Ian from EVR and I just want to tell you something between the two of us" and then immediately exploded into a fury with the words "I fucking hate that guy!!!" I was immediately engrossed, as was Cynthia my girlfriend, who reacted strongly, later admitting that she was frozen in fear. Brian quickly immersed himself in the standard form of his typical "intense phone message", moving through the expected four stages of communication which make up any such message: First, full sentences filled with anger...then moving into full sentences highlighted by variations on the word 'fuck'...moving from there into sentences consisting almost entirely of variations on the word 'fuck' then

onto half sentences devoid of complete thoughts and then finally: word fragments back to back, completely incomprehensible and replete with venom. All in all, this phone call highlights the best of Brian Dingleline. I give it my highest recommendation. For a copy for yourself, call and demand to talk to Brian immediately, saying that you are a representative of a major record label looking for sympathy because sales are down. JUG (Seattle CrimethInc HQ)

DEMO REVIEWS

The Al Burian Experience "Special Message for Young People" demo: This is the sort of hilarious, absurd project that everyone should have a friend who undertakes. Al took all the free tapes those big corporation motherfuckers leave in record stores to promote their difficult sellers (um, Vanilla Ice, anyone?), taped over them, made color covers at his copyshop job, and took them back to the record stores, where he tried to sell them for \$1 each (though all Al's various friends and enemies just assumed they were in the free bin and inadvertently shoplifted them all). I think I was the only one that actually bought one, just because I ran into Al on his way to drop them off; but I don't really mind, since this is the only demo I've actually paid for in about five years and it seems appropriate enough that the one I pay for be the biggest joke. The music is Al singing in his best slick angsty Nine Inch Nails voice over a casio keyboard... the lyrics are where it's at: "I tried so hard to kill you but you wouldn't play dead, I tried to insult your intelligence but it just went over your head..." I'm not sure if this is the case, but I sure hope Al had at least one friend who felt genuinely insulted by this. If he didn't, he's not trying hard enough. Al's been trying to get people to hate him for years (witness the Ray Kappo-[late Shelter era]-style photo of Al looking cool on the cassette jacket), but it hasn't worked, and I think that either testifies to the insincerity of his efforts, the dull-wittedness of his colleagues (i.e. us), or both, and it sure is a sordid situation. Anyway, the moral to the story is this: before we die of boredom from modern music, all your musician motherfuckers must run out into the streets and do your own little ridiculous side projects like this! —b

307 Blueridge Road, Carrboro, NC 27510

Cockroach "Lost Generation" demo: Oh yeah, real punk rock! Screechy rough shrieking vocals, circa the mid-eighties, fast simple guitar lines and double-time drums, a mix which isn't polished but is exactly as clear and forceful as it needs to be, super-energetic playing on the part of the band, the occasional unexpected part to keep things interesting, good songwriting and manageable song-lengths. This is great, good work! There's a song called "Riot at Johnny's Place," another one (the namesake of the demo) about the Dutch government complaining about the shiftlessness of their youth and then trying to shut down everything they try to do. There's nothing more to say, if you like the Circle Jerks or G.B.H. you'll really enjoy this, great demo. —b

stox 1, 5981 ND Panningen (lim), Netherlands

Curb Dogs "Demo '97": I think I am getting this tape about a year too late...maybe they have a Demo '98 out now or an upcoming Demo '99 for you to check out. This six song demo starts off with a pack of snarling dogs (literally...as a sound bite - and no pun intended there) and continues on with the same sounds now being made by the bands music. They play a sort of thrash metal crossover hardcore hybrid (think Agnostic Front when "Cause for Alarm" was released) with sing along back ups and alternating slow doom tempos for an apocalyptic feel. The vocals are really throaty, inspiring my reviewer compatriot Cynthia (see Since the Fall demo review for identification credentials) to comment "It doesn't sound like his voice could possibly make it" - but it did without a problem. Lyrically...there are some great moments on this, relating back to that apocalyptic sense I mentioned before. From the second song "Weight of Time": "when I take a closer look at me / and realize I'm not who I want to be / it's like snoozing in a dreamless sleep / but there still is some faith in me". I also like the intelligent approach to religion taken with "your gracious god is everywhere / so what's the matter

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why doesn't he care / preaching to us about a distant paradise / while you make hell on earth for me", which identifies a central issue with religion, that it prepares us for a next life by ignoring and denying this life. These ideas are tied together in the next song after that which identifies: "day by day we're moving to a subconscious beat / we're just slaves to an inert machine", which is slightly dangerous in that it separates an "us" from the "inert machine", as if we are essentially powerless, when actually we, as in people are the most significant part of that societal machine. We are not distanced from it. We are it, and in that is our greatest potential power. So overall, good job. I have one constructive critique though: the next time in the studio, fade your songs out when doing your mix down. You obviously care enough about the songs to record them well and mix them down in the first place, and a fade out or edited ending rather than a awkward tape cut-off will really tighten each song up, making them individual assaults. JUG *Curbdogs*; c/o Jose Venegas; nordstr. 227; 8037 Zurich; Switzerland

Dead Thirteen "Sleep My Little Dead" demo: This begins a little roughly: the drums come in, the singer does a microphone check, one guitar come in, the other does (a little late?), the whole thing seems a little discombobulated... ok, now it's started so what do we have here? The mix is a little blurry, the drums and bass could have a bit more power in their sound. The drummer sounds like he's fucking up here and there. The singer does some speaking that is mixed a bit too loudly and could sound more confident; otherwise, he's screaming with a New York metal hardcore band voice. Musically you can tell this is from the northeastern USA, it has that steady midtempo drumbeat that has been carefully perfected there for people to kick and karate chop each other to. Between songs they have snippets of themselves fucking around in the studio. There's one song, a fast punk number about being white trash, where the shouted youth crew chorus is "forgot to pay the rent!"—that's pretty funny, maybe I should have come at this demo with more of a sense of humor. I just can't tell how much I'm supposed to take them seriously otherwise. They need to tighten up musically (there are twelve songs on this demo, which would be good if they were all ready...), tighten up their playing a bit, get a bit more focused, get a better recording. But demos are for figuring that stuff out. —b

Slave Union, 58 Grace Street,

Contessa "" demo: This is possibly the best demo I have heard all year. Mix the angriest moments of rage from Black Flag with the chaos of Deadguy...add the pain of Catharsis with...and this is the best part: vividly expressed passion, through the performance itself, and the result is Contessa. The lyrics don't hit me as much themselves as the way they are sung. This is an extremely rare twist on the way bands usually come across, which is that the lyrics are impacting but the performance leaves a lot to be desired. How much do I like this tape? Enough that I got in touch with the singer from the email address on the demo and interviewed him for this review (answers have been edited for spelling and grammar, but give the guy a fucking break: he sings like he has a million anguished souls inside his guts):

1. Could you give me a short overview which concisely tells me what some of the songs on the demo are about, what each means to you, and why the song was written? The lyrics are personally written and close to my heart simply because I can't sing an essay. I have political views and feelings but rarely will you hear me say something directly about that. "Sap" is about my observations on relationships, mine and more specifically my friends. It says that we play too many games and say too little - and most of what is said goes unheard or is taken another way thus creating tension and self doubt and helpless feelings of desperation. Love truly is a harder path. "Feast" is a slightly political song written in my personal way. It compares big biz suits to a pack of vultures ripping and tearing their prey apart at the first sign of weakness. In the world of big biz the weak are destroyed. If the big guys can't have what they want, no one can. They will continue to take even when they will never need more than what they have. People starve because of this system while food rots in storage. Go figure. "Dreams in the Dead of Night": I have suffered, as well as millions of others, with mental illness. My own problems are being worked on and I am winning the battle. It is an oppressive world, and even more so when you do not have the mental capacity to deal with so called "normal" problems. Take a moment to think: what would it be like if you could not deal with or comprehend simple feelings or speech? The song deals with an emotional battle raging inside myself just to go outside everyday.
2. Why differentiate between the "personal" and the "political"? Can you see any connection between the two? Personal and political I guess are linked in many ways. I guess personal gain motivates greedy people in power to do actions. For myself my personal actions in the music scene and at work or at home effect those around me and it could be seen as a political thing. I think you have to work on your own little world before you can change the one around you.
3. OK, tell me...what do you listen to when you are feeling like everything is falling apart around you? What songs bring you back to appreciating beauty and revive your passion for life? Ok the what I would listen to when I am in need of something to make me happy. Mostly I love old blues like Lead Belly and Brownie McGee and Sonny Terry, Josh white Sr., Big Bill Broonzy, as well as Mississippi John Hurt plus many others. Then I go into the others: Black Sabbath "Master of Reality", Pissed Happy Children, Los Crudos, Rorschach, 400 Years, Aggression, old Social Distortion, old Necros, Blast "POWER OF EXPRESSION", Raw power the old stuff, and the AVENGERS - man, I love her voice - it soothes me and makes me all crazy as well. Some of the music may seem dark and depressing but it has an opposite effect on me. — So there it is: the words of Contessa straight from the singer's mouth. To give you an idea of what it is like to listen to this tape, I will give you Cynthia (music critic/compatriot/empath) who commented (without being "into" hardcore/punk, mind you) that this tape really reached her. She said "This has passion" which, coming from the non-punk-initiated, should say worlds to you, dear reader. Later, during one of the tape's more intense parts, she commented, "Holy shit! I like it! Its nice!" She followed that critical gem up with "This really stirs me up" and then "This is one of the few hardcore bands about whom I'd say that I'd like to listen to more." There you have it. The power behind the music and vocals is what drives this band for me and I give it my highest recommendation on those accounts alone. JUG

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Waterford, NY 12188

Down My Throat demo: This is surprisingly good for a demo. The recording is first rate, thick and heavy, the playing and songwriting is good, everything's good. Musically this stands in the tradition of hardcore that extends back through bands like Earthmover to Judge and the like: it's quick, a little metallic without losing its tense simplicity, lots of danceable parts, a lot of changes in each song without it seeming wandering, an entirely modern sound that draws on both so-called "old-school" speed and straightforwardness and '90's chugga-chugga without being limited to either. Yeah, this is awesome. The singer has more of a yelling voice than the screaming that most singers do these days, but it doesn't detract from the forcefulness of this record. The riffs themselves are really good sometimes, even. The lyrics are probably the least original part, dealing with a lot of stuff about pain and being made to suffer by those nameless backstabbing others, but they don't hold this back at all. God, I hope the other demos I have to review are this good. —b

Liljelund, Melstenintie 9 D 1, 02170 Espoo, Finland

Eternal Brotherhood "Demo '98": From Japan, these guys sound very much like Agnostic Front circa the "One Voice" CD. Tough punchy NYHC (in this case STHC for Setagaya Tokyo Hardcore) with strong, full production. Not bad at all. The vocalist has a deep voice, again the benefit of good production (that we can actually discern vocal quality) and the music is non-standard...with enough diversity in approaches and attack to make it continually interesting. A question...why, why, why do foreign bands often sing in broken English? While the use of English is awkward here, some of the lyrics are good regardless (we'll get to the English misusage, always a joy, later on...). The first song is about domestic violence: "taste the bitterness of it / the damage you've done to her", but the last line, directed towards the attacker "it's not the end but the beginning / c'mon hit your card" left me feeling a bit like I'd gotten suddenly caught in the Twilight Zone. The third of these four songs is where they really started to lose me lyrically. The music upheld its power throughout, but the translation of lyrics from Japanese into English left the point of this song a mystery to me. I think that its a song about unity or unifying their crew. They say: "How many follows you? / Eternal brotherhood / You won't open your heart / Cast away worthless pride / and perverseness help each other / its time to make massive posse". The meaning

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behind this song escaped me until I realized...of course! How could I have been so stupid and shortsighted? Here I was thinking that they were talking about crews and mobs and gangs ...but I had been wrong! These guys fooled even me. I realized that "make massive posse" is being used here as a sophisticated euphemism for lovemaking. It dawned on me that this song is actually an invitation to a scene group orgasm. I felt more comfortable with that realization, once I understood what was going on. I can't wait. On the last song, they blew it all...from the first song, intelligent and interesting, to the last where they resort to emulating the one man whom no person can emulate: Rick ta Life. Rick is Rick and there is no other, so why jump on his back and do his thing. Damn...and you really had me going for a little while after song #1, even though song #2 had a "da" in there as a warning of what was to come. From the last song, "Game": "you play with loaded dice / and play da devil with game / you more than fuckin' stupid / nothing to change your way...I know your destiny / already hit da breakshot / I see you down for life / difficult to change da game." Uh huh. Ok guys...we all can read that you thank half of NYHC in your thank you list, but to do this 25 ta Life rip off is a bit much. I'd like to see you stick to the political/social and keep your brains thinking and creative. Da last thing we need is foreign bands takin' English grammar lessons from da NYHC. I really will be looking forward to hearing your next release. JUG

Eternal Brotherhood; Ken-One; 1-3-21 #202 Sakurajosui; Setagaya, Tokyo; 156-0045; JAPAN

Falling Action demo: For this demo, I once again employed the use of Cynthia X, Reviewer Extraordinaire. There gets to a point at the end of the day when my ear starts to turn to mush, and that is when I call in the intensive artillery...in this case my partner-in-crime Cynthia, who saved the day and this review as well, from descending into total oblivion. Cynthia nailed this tape right on the head when she commented that the singer is trying to articulate his words so much that he has lost his passion. I stopped and thought about it, as I had been trying to figure out why this tape wasn't hitting me throughout as I had hoped it would, and that was exactly the reason: the singer is talking/singing right when he is supposed to, the musicians are right on with their fast sxe hardcore musicianship and breakdown parts, the sing alongs are there and 20 people deep, the lyrics are about sincerity/insincerity and holding true to beliefs...and in the midst of all that, I often find myself searching for this band's identity. I have heard a lot of bands like this and I want to know where their, meaning Falling Action's, passions are and what drives them to play the music they play. I listened to this tape about three times all the way through, to the point where I started to know the songs myself, in order to find that energy and individual spirit...and by the later listens it started to grow on me. But I want a band with this much potential and this much energy to kick my ass from the start of the first song, not by the end of the third listen. I want them to lose their fucking minds and hear all of their instruments break to pieces against the walls of the studio...the forms here are too restrictive. The use of a ride cymbal in one song, which caught my attention, isn't enough to show me who they are. Hitting their old school sxe marks has had its price here, and I want to see them hit beyond those marks on their next release and really take some risks. JUG

(*Falling Action* address misplaced)

Fatal Justice demo: This is the band which finally sent Cynthia over the top. Alphabetically, this one comes up near the beginning, but chronologically, I put this cassette in about three months after I started my first review. Cynthia, new to HC/punk, suddenly lost her mind when this came on. Death metal vocals often have that effect. Vocally, we have what sounds like at least three tracks going at once: a guttural death growl, a screamed track with higher pitched vocals, and a spoken sometimes singing underlying track. In between some songs, there is the sound of an ominous wind: very metal, and darkly blackly broodingly twistedly evil. Don't get me wrong...this isn't a death metal demo. It just has those influences lyrically and musically at times. Musically, its got blast beats and speedy guitars a la speed thrash like At the Gates, but with much poorer recording quality - good for a demo though. Its replete with harmonic Atari video game sound mayhem, and an occasional melodic clear channel guitar line. Lyrically there are a couple of highlights. The main gem is the song "Black Monk" (title a mystery to me as well) when the singer states "Stab me in the back with a blood covered knife / my blood flows away / I'm fighting to survive / No one hears - I wait till the black monk appears". Now guys, we all know that getting stabbed in the

back with a bloody knife is a sure way to risk not only HIV infection, but also Hepatitis C, which is a nasty little bugger of a disease. Now, I know you mention the word "daemon" three times in this same song and that spelling is incredible evil, but like the rhythm method, that in itself just doesn't offer enough protection. Take care of yourselves and at least use a clean hypoallegenic knife when getting stabbed in the back. Especially if you expect the wound to be serious enough for all of your blood to flow away. Consideration must be given to the person stabbing you as well in a situation like that. I recommend an HIV test every six months just to be sure. That way, both the stabber and the stabbed can suffer confidently. JUG

Roelof; By de Leyweg 32; 8412 5H Hoornsterzwaag; The NETHERLANDS

Final Exit "West Teg" demo ("sessions '85-'89"): Wow, this comes complete with a parody of the liner notes from that first Lost & Found reissue of the Judge "Chung King" sessions. This is Final Exit playing demo versions of the oldschool classics that ended up on their first CD. It sounds pretty good, and the wild energy is still there in places; it's not as good as that CD was, I'd say, so it's not quite an essential item, but Final Exit was one of the best bands of this decade in my estimation, so this demo is a great thing to have if you can find it. The vocals might be a little less impassioned, which is a drawback, but there's more noise and feedback at the beginnings of the songs, which I always think is a plus. The version of "Mutilated Scumbag" is awesome, it's barely recognizable. —b

Zedog Productions c/o Lina Zedig, Glimmergangen 21, 632 34 Eskilstuna, Sweden

Gocce Nel Mare demo: What if I told you that this demo came with a 90 page booklet? What if I told you that the lyrics to this band are printed in Italian and English for the most part and come with essays in English about the songs, along with literally dozens of pages of text in Italian? What if I told you that the music was original noisy frantically desperate punk rock with a female singer and male backups with lyrics about the uniqueness of the individual and female empowerment among other things? I hope that at that point that you'd bust out the IRC's and send away for more information on this. If you know ANYONE who speaks Italian, have them get in touch with me right away so that I can have them translate this entire book for me. I love this tape. She speaks, rather than screams most of the time...and when she does scream, it is desperate and strained, as if in agony. Throughout this recording (song number unknown, as I haven't been counting) there is an undercurrent of intensive political awareness and also of a vegan lifestyle. Most of the zine/booklet which comes with the demo contains an interview with ALF representatives as far as I can tell. I wish I read Italian! I am going to keep this review a bit short and to the point, and tell you that if you send away for one demo this issue, throw a coin in the air and decide between Contessa and Gocce Nel Mare. Both are excellent, and well worth exploring. I love this demo, and hope to see more from them in the future. Can Trial play with you when we come over to Europe? Get in touch with me, please!!! Xjugglerx@aol.com JUG

Cane Records; c/o Jacopo Volpe; Via S.Marco No 17; 36100 Vicenza; ITALY

Hangfire Disaster demo CD: This CD, above all else, introduced me to new concepts in DIY. The demo is only available on CD, for \$1 (that's ONE dollar, kids) and that price is for both postpaid and in person. The CD has an insert about DIY CD recording from which I learned that the cost of producing CD's at home (if, and that's a big IF you have a personal computer) are lower than doing cassettes, and are completely more reliable as a format. Its interesting how the music of the proletariat changes with technology: demo cassettes used to represent DIY and all you needed was a crappy stereo. In a few years, when the price of computers capable of doing the job drop to a level where more people have access to them, CD's will be as everywhere as demos. I appreciate that as a reviewer, because when a tape sucks and I throw it across the room, it breaks into numerous aggravating pieces, which I inevitably step on later in the evening. In the case of CD's, they lend themselves well to being thrown dozens of times, and the enjoyment can last for hours, with no painful residual side effects. Luckily for Hangfire Disaster, I won't be throwing their CD across the room anytime soon. Fast punk/hc here with vocals which are actually relatively easy to understand, even without a lyric sheet. The lyrics themselves challenge the listener in a number of different ways. How about this passage from "Take My Name Off the List" (a song inspired in part by "The List" by Filth!): "Stay together in the face of greed / avoid hyperbolic synecdoche". Hyperbolic

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what?!?! Okay, you psychotic maniacs...I have to actually bust out the dictionary for this one: *synēc'do-che* (si-nek'doīke), n. (Gr. *synekdechesthai* to receive jointly) Rhet. A figure of speech by which a part is put for the whole. Next time, why don't you just use the ancient Greek "*synekdechesthai*"??? You know that I am only kidding...I love the word choice...it made my brain scream in terror for a moment. I saw this band live here in Seattle and they actually talked about specific politics! Not just "Hey...make a change...blah blah blah" but actually cited Seattle City Law by ordinance number and explained their thoughts. JUG

Hangfire

Disaster,

newpues@u.washington.edu, (425) 670-0482

Harbinger "demo": No lyrics and no tape cover... hrm...well, all I can tell you is that this is a poorly recorded cross between Killing Time and Botch with an angry guy screaming gutturally. The levels change suddenly and continually as if someone kept hitting buttons on the recording console during the session. The levels overall are too high and the music is all overdriven and fuzzy. Well, since this was sent to me on a recycled tape I checked out the flipside for what was there, and after listening to it I think I will review it as well. The flipside has a guy doing an infomercial on it aimed at potential stock investors. He is advertising his get-rich-quick scheme which includes a package of books, up-to-the-minute info paging systems, workshops, and seminars almost (and the key word here is "almost") guaranteed to make you a richer person through timely stock investments. Ok, motherfucker, let's think about that for a minute. You are some supposedly rich and brilliant investor who has devised and consolidated a strategy which will make me and all of my friends rich and brilliant as well. Tell me this, Mr. "Sell Stock Strategies For \$34.95"...why, if you have made billions with your strategy, do you have any need for wasting your time in a recording studio producing a full length tape trying to convince me to part with my measly \$34.95? If your strategies worked, you wouldn't need my money, as the interest alone on your trillions would make you more in a day than I make in a lifetime...and if your strategies don't work, then you are a liar and thief. Even worse, if your strategies DO work and then you still went into a studio to record this idiotic tape trying to capture my pocket change, then you are just a goddamn moron. Is that the best thing you could think to do with your time and money? If I had billions like you supposedly do, I would be using that money to do something helpful and creative (...visions of CrimethInc World Headquarters filling a 90 floor downtown Manhattan skyscraper...or maybe a black CrimethInc Blimp to chase down and destroy with heat seeking missiles that dumb Goodyear balloon as it flew over the Super Bowl...or maybe solid platinum drums for Alexei from Catharsis...or maybe a Trial tour helicopter for each band member to replace our broken van, which was always crowded by the end of tour anyway...all of which are good options for me to consider for the future). And all this is aside from the fact that stock information, insider trading plans, does not go to the poor or uninitiated common person...it is for the already rich. Like you are really going to be able to get me up to the minute critical information which the soon to be skyrocketing wealthy company CEO's are just dying to have me know. Sure. I bet there are fleets of friends of theirs who get that information long before the public, and longer still before me. Whatever. You are a

nerd, and your stock tape sucks. JUG

Harbinger; no address given; Ryan 253-850-1084

Last in Line "Welcome to A-10 Country" demo: This tape has a little bit of everything on it. From a fun demo cover (you somehow got this one to the right reviewer, guys...I am a Dawn/Day of the Dead fanatic - anyone else might not have appreciated it!) to good music and even better vocals to a bit of comedy as well. The music here is like a faster, more harder edged Redemption '87, meaning raw vocals over fast true old school hardcore. Listen to me...I have turned into an idiot..."true" old school...what the fuck

does that mean?!?! Well...what I mean by that is that this tape hits me in somewhat the same way as the old old school bands like Negative Approach hit me. They have that snotty critical sound which formed the foundation for the music of resistance, what was then a real alternative (instead of a current day mainstream "alternative") to the bubble gum crap being played on the radio. I miss bands who sound like this, even though at some points on this tape I found myself thinking that I had heard it all somewhere before - of course I have...my favorite bands from the early years of listening to this music were bands who sounded like this: critical of their surroundings and raw. I listened to this tape twice all the way through and the second time through it really caught my ear. Lyrically, they look at those around them and wonder where their focus and direction is as they drop their ideals and accept apathy. Best parts: the cover of Negative Approach's "Tied Down" (which they do really well, sounding quite a bit like the original, especially vocally...which is not an easy accomplishment; the Reagan Youth cover ("Degenerated") and the hidden comedy piece the end of the tape. Thinking about this tape overall: it was both thought provoking and entertaining at times, which is all I could ever ask for in a demo. Go for it, guys...I want to hear a 7" soon. JUG

Last in Line; c/o D.J. 413-568-9758 or email: lastin98@aol.com

Memnoch "Epitome" demo: Begins with a (melodramatic) sample of a man speaking of freedom and the fight for it. The sample could have been a tiny bit quieter in relation to the music, that's an error younger bands often make. Anyway, on to

the demo, which is surprisingly well-recorded and played, I mean really well-recorded and played. Everything that's good about this is exactly what was good about bands like Congress and Vitality from the Belgian "edgemetal" scene: fast, catchy, spooky, hypermetallic hardcore with good production and a high energy level. The songwriting is quite good, nothing extraneous here, most transitions are absolutely fluid, plenty of variety. The hissing/screaming vocals are well-executed, although, as often happens in this genre, they could have a little less restraint and a little more passion in them. A lot of these singers get caught up in trying so hard to scream well and powerfully that they forget that the most important thing is to express emotion, and you have to be ready to do unusual, unpredictable things to do that. Anyway, that would be my only advice, this is really good. Great powerful guitar sound, well-written lyrics (a rare thing) about important topics (another fairly rare thing) centering generally on the damage we're doing to the planet, I've gotten really lucky with demos so far this issue. Yeah, I'm still listening to this, it isn't getting old at all, this is gonna replace Congress's "Other Cheek" for me. —b

The Female Anchor of Sade demo: Packaged in sandpaper... somebody's been reading about the Situationists. That's apparent in the hilarious self-consciously intellectual liner notes, too, which I think warrant reprinting here in keeping with Inside Front's tradition of reprinting without permission. The music itself is interesting, deliberately weird, incorporating electronic noises and distortion, sometimes unlistenable from static overload, other times going into extended samplings of men speaking or singing in languages I don't recognize, readings from William Burroughs' "Naked Lunch" followed by death shrieks, etc. Occasionally they pause to make epileptic, grindy, noisy hardcore music, which isn't bad at all, if again deliberately off-putting. This is the sort of thing that is free enough that if they started to take it really seriously they could probably make some really interesting innovations in the genre, although they would probably surprise themselves by doing so. It's entirely possible that they mean their rhetoric literally and never intend to make a more coherent demo than this, which would be admirable (if they do mean what they say against art, there would be no reason for them to do anything more solid than the piece of anti-art which is this recording). Perhaps they're interesting or incredible live. Perhaps they don't "perform" live, or perhaps they have already moved on to more exciting things such as Brit-pop and the Socialist Workers' Party; intellectual/artistic hyper-radicalism can lead to that, if one is not careful to remain focused. It's worth mentioning that I picked this up in Umea, a city now in the final decaying phase of what was a really vital, creative hardcore scene; this demo is the sort of monster often produced by the dying spasms of such a community. And come to think of it, the anti-art and anti-professionalist sentiments expressed in the liner notes are exactly what that city needs, with so much careerism and personality cultism among the punk musicians there, in contrast to their political ideas. —b

DETHO REVIEWS

B. Brunsch, Grenzstr. 23, 01689 Niederau, Germany

Radio Unfriendly Advance promo CD: This is a local Seattle band who are just getting started. I offered to review their promo CD, although lyricless and layoutless, on the grounds of their DIY ethic alone. Since I can say little

about the CD itself without lyrics (other than to describe it as speedy pop punk throughout - at one tempo for most of the time - with higher pitched sung vocals, sing alongs and three chord guitar work - all of which made me think of 90's punk mixed with the early 80's...pop punk meets early Seven Seconds?!?!?) I will let the band speak for itself: from the bands handwritten 'promo sheet'. "Radio Unfriendly is a three piece fastcore band from Seattle. Marek is 15 and he plays drums. Tyler is also 15 and he plays guitar and back up vox. Kevin is 20, plays bass and lead vox. We are all straight edge, but we're not a hardcore band, so we have a little trouble fitting in to different scenes. We're putting out an 18 song full length CD on January 8th. It is coming out on our own label called Make Yer Own Damn Records." I talked to Marek the other day and asked him a couple of questions, his answer to the first of which is one of my favorite answers in band interview history. First question: why do you write your name like that? "One time we just wrote it like that and we just kept doing it. Our name is really dumb...its generic and stupid...and we thought this would help." How can people get in touch with you to find out more about your CD? "They can write to us and send stuff or they can send money...like three bucks...for a tape of our music." — So go at it...maybe at least write them a letter and let them know that you appreciate their DIY spirit, even if you don't have any money to send. Think about it...supporting the committed young bands will just about insure that we have interesting and hopefully even inspiring music to listen to when we are old and gnarled revolutionaries. Big points here for courage and commitment. JUG *Radio Unfriendly*; 317 16th Avenue; Seattle WA 98122

The Real Enemy "Twin Cities Straight Edge" demo: A politically aware straight edge band! Finally! Goddamn...if I put this in and heard another band talking about the same old fucking stupid "we can make a change" crap without any solid plans or ideas of their own, I would have sold my microphone and picked up a guitar, changing permanently over to folk music. The Real Enemy made my day. Starting with creative handmade/silk screened packaging, this five song demo really shines throughout. What I like about this demo, aside from the fact that their songs are creative and engaging, is the underlying connection I sense to them understanding their punk rock roots...not "hardcore pride" or "youth crew" or any of that junk, but an awareness that this is the music of rebellion and of those dissatisfied with the status quo and willing to do something about it. All of the lyrics are super imposed over political woodcuts and

graphics which describe their politics, and the package as a whole is solid: the graphics go beyond the lyrics, describing topics not necessarily found in their song topics, which implies that these guys run deeper still than the five songs on this tape. And an anti-Nike song...good for you for actually taking

a stand and singing about the topic. Bonus points for having a political quote printed on your lyric sheet, and extra bonus points for having that quote be about loving oneself and how that is lost when hating other human beings. This is a four track demo, and as such, the quality is not the best possible, but I appreciate what they are going for and strongly recommend supporting this new band. JUG

The Real Enemy; 2035 Montreal Ave.; St. Paul, MN 55116

Since The Fall "Reading . PA Hardcore"

demo: I was honored for this review to have the help of my girlfriend Cynthia: she happened to be with me when I started the tape going and so was able to give me her thoughts on it as well. Never mind that she'd never heard of hardcore before we started dating a few months back, and never mind that she would rather listen to R. Carlos Nakai or Pink Floyd than Trial or Catharsis...she's starting to enjoy more and more of this type of music as she explores it. (...and while we're on the topic, how many of you diverse punk hardcore rockers have ever even heard of R. Carlos Nakai? Native flute player...with more emotion and intensity in a moment of his silences than what we often see in full songs of our aggression. Check him out...) After all, is this music we play...this supposedly "revolutionary" music...only for ourselves? For hardcore/punks? For those who already understand and accept it? I would hope the fuck not. That would be the antithesis of what I would consider a revolutionary approach for any genre or art form. Anyway...it is with those thoughts that Cynthia was invited to claim the not-so-prestigious title of "Reviewer" here. Onto this tape: It reminded me quite a bit of the San Diego hardcore kings Unbroken, which is to say desperate screaming put to metal hardcore featuring hot guitar licks and tricks. It is too easy to say "metal hardcore" and have that describe 60% of the music out today, but add the guitar tricks and you have something which we can separate from the pack. The vocals here are more raw than what we experienced with Unbroken however, and are much more diverse, in that the singer approaches his lyrics by singing at times - actually doing vocal scale styled singing. A bold choice. I respect that, even if I didn't like it myself. Musically, these guys have skills on their respective instruments, and it all comes together occasionally. Cynthia was quick to note in the first song that the tempo changes from fast to mid were to her liking: "I like this part," she said, "It's danceable." Next week she'll be kickboxing and destroying all of you fuckers, so watch out... The tape has a lot of that: slow tempo dancefloor mayhem...but the part which struck me

You Swine!

The Female Anchor of Sade is the raging Sus Scrofa of London, bursting through the thin paper walls of conservative "modern" art. The Sus Scrofa is the post-industrial reincarnation of Sarimner, the immortal pig of Valhalla. Its fur is brown shifting in grey and black. It battles the offspring of the CECA, the modern interpretation of Machiavelli's "Prince" with great courage. Through the dark cloaks of London it arrived in the very north of Sweden to insure the passions of the havenots, the Kronstadt sailors, the workers and the death of the privilege in everyday culture. Realizing that culture is the most subtle commodity, the one that helps sell all the others. Very much like a super hero from a comic book the Sus Scrofa, the filthy pig, continues its everlasting battle. A battle against beauty, not just against old notions of it, but against the concept as such. Against art (and music) as belonging to a dimension parallel to the one we experience every day. In favor of human creativity, but highly suspicious towards its abstract expression modes in contemporary society. In favor of human passion. Against the bullshit making-a-song-so-that-we-can-make-a-record-so-that-we-can-tour attitude, no matter how do-it-yourself it is, since it's the most depraved routine, an insult to the intelligence and taste of the public and a waste of life of those who actually think that kids in bands want to express something. Against the banal. Against the common sense. In favor of militant expressions of love, such as riots. Against songs, pictures, paintings, and other works of art, since those objects keep the creator a prisoner to a time that has past, expressing a feeling that has been felt. The making (and consuming) of those objects involves a projecting of subjectivity and consequently an objectification of the human being. The work of art is in this sense seen very much as a god. The Sus Scrofa is an aggressive non-believer. Against the professional, among other things because the artist, poet, punk rock band, etc. making a living out of their shit preserve kids notions of the glamorous wage laborer, the professionals being directly counter-revolutionary in this sense, no matter how radical their official political stance is. Against the notion of social-realism as the proletarian art (fucking Stalinism). Against entertainment, as it retains the division between performer and audience, and consequently alienation. Against subculture. Descended from the filth Sus Scrofa doesn't fear dirt, but still, doesn't embrace it. In strong opposition towards the romanticization of being a victim it isn't particularly fond of ragged clothes, dirty socks or mindless drug use. Instead it advocates the building of a mass movement to overthrow the contemporary modes of production, since social revolution is the only way to liberate creativity entirely.

J. Rosen, Geografirand 14A, 907 32 Umea, Sweden

DEMO REVIEWS

musically was all of the guitar dive bombs and whammy bar insanity thrown in from time to time. At one point, two guitars did simultaneous dive bombs into whammy bar attacks which resulted in five seconds of what sounded like a room full of Nintendo game systems all going off at once in a video game laser gun sound orgy. Cynthia commented: "That's really rock, " and then went on to flip through the rest of the tapes at hand. So, overall, I gave it two or three listens, but without lyrics included (a definite minus), I wasn't really hit hard by any of it except the Yngwie Malmsteen axe wielding. And why does it say "Reading PA hardcore" if you're from Connecticut? Who knows. Onward...

Since the Fall; P.O. Box 74; Farmington CT 06034-0074 - send SASE for lyric sheet and stickers

Sipowicz "demo": Whoa. This tape scared me...and I like that. Reminiscent throughout on a cross between...get this...Kiss it Goodbye and Gehenna...this West Seneca NY band delivers a bunch of songs which are ugly sounding and particularly engaging. Vocally, I actually thought of Deicide (but without the same intensity of vocal effects...its more on the side of Deadguy with two vocal tracks from time to time). Lyrically they are proclaiming rage through non specific terms, which I like because it makes me think and feel and wonder for myself rather than having my emotions and theirs spoon fed to me. Take all of the above influences and sounds and mix it together with what was the most troubling part: that the whole project has the feel of being some collective joke among the band members and their friends. The band members are introduced on the insert next to their respective instruments as "Joey-Kids; Noj-Plzzas; Todd-Garbage; Rusty-Water; Luke-Donuts". I don't get it, but I also don't feel that I need I have to in order to enjoy the music (the four songs of which take a long time to get through...very complex and involved). The band instrument list might very well be like the approach taken by En-deavor who made up strange names for serious songs in order to be taken a bit more lightly. Maybe all of their hometown friends understand...which is disturbing because I get the feeling that there is a whole cadre of these dangerously insane people in West Seneca who are members and fans of this band and that in itself, aside from anything else effecting their mental in/stability puts me at a profound disadvantage should they ever decide to organize further and attack CrimethInc Headquarters while I am there discussing high-brow political theory. These are people attempting to, and on a certain degree succeeding in, creating cutting edge music. Avoid them physically, but somehow try to buy their demo tape. I could see them on tour with Converge and being not a match for them or even trying to be, but rather standing as an excellent complement in their own right. JUG

Sipowicz; 104 Bernice Drive; West Seneca NY 14224; 716-685-0932; selfeye@aol.com

Strikeout "Grievous" demo: God, another awesome demo from Europe! Plenty of variety in the songwriting, very cutting edge German hardcore sound, usually speedy, plenty of breaks and changes, "danceable" parts here and there, unusual metal flourishes and strange noisy parts to spice it up, screaming singer leading the charge. There's enough drama here to make the songs exciting, to make the music seem to matter. The mix could be a bit clearer, but it suits this music just fine. The lyrics are excellent, too: "pressure is growing above me, I hope the sky falls and kills all their methods of state-control, our words have no meaning cause demos have no say." I wonder where all the great demos from the USA are? Are we completely behind the Europeans in making good music, am I failing to keep up with what's going on in my backyard, or are my tastes just disconnected from my peers? —b

Wolfram Zarnack, Talweg 1a, 23558 Lubeck, Germany

The Tet Offensive "Vote of Non-Confidence" demo: At least I think this is a demo, it's so slick (and shrinkwrapped, which is unnecessary and eco-unfriendly) that it's hard to tell. OK, that aside, this is awesome. It's strange, sort of deranged, noisy modern hardcore stuff, really unpredictable songwriting, tempo changes between nervous speed and throbbing pound, excellent recording that really flatters the music. Great use of the snare drum in unusual rolls, etc. The vocals are high and screechy, they might take some getting used to, but I'm just thrilled to hear somebody with an original voice, I've heard that one deep tough voice everybody fucking tries to have til I'm sick to death of it. The lyrics, song explanations, song topics in general are fucking awesome, they deal with a wide range of super-aware local Canadian/internationally relevant issues and deal with them well (corporate monopoly on funeral homes, bureaucracy and third world hunger, Canadian education "reform," American military/cultural imperialism...). This band is right on in every way and I expect to see them do great things. —b

3075 Council Ring Road, Mississauga, ON L5L 1N7 Canada

Unavowed "Anathema" demo: This tape came with a photocopied promo sheet (D.I.Y.!) and a vinyl sticker. Hmm...the band's promo sheet acknowledges that people often don't know how to classify them (either metal, old school, or as tough guys) and that fits me as well. They don't come across as tough guys (although there was no lyric sheet here so I have no idea what they are singing about and might very well be on their way over to my house to kill me as we speak). And actually that was a strange choice: to include a vinyl sticker and photocopied bio but no lyric sheet. They don't come across as old school for the most part, unless we are talking about what their bio refers to (early 1990's NYHC). But the metal tip...ay...there's the rub! Cynthia (reviewer of the year) said "This sounds like heavy metal." Don't get me wrong...I like this tape, but is a metal fest. The guitars have that DRI metal sound which is more fuzzy than crunchy, with an occasional hot lick thrown in. The singer sort of talks in a low throaty voice instead of screaming from his guts, which is interesting to my ear, but not inspiring. If you mixed DRI with Dan

O'Mahoney on a really pissed off day you'd have an idea as to what you were getting into when buying this demo. This isn't a tape which made me want to eat my fucking car, but overall isn't bad at all. I hope they get the label they are looking for with their promo sheet. Labels get in touch! JUG
\$3 worldwide to: Steve Smillie; PO Box 141048; Minneapolis MN 55414-1048; 612-696-9111; oneprcnt@visi.com

Unproved Truth "Interludium" demo: Really fancy packaging includes an airbrush-painted cardboard box, containing the tape (featuring a full-color cover) and a separate lyric/art sheet for every song. Their songwriting is weird, kind of sprawling, the different sections don't go together as smoothly as they could. The music was recorded on a four track, which shows in a really trebly, weak drum mix. The mix is overloaded enough that everything changes a bit when the weak, yelling vocals come in. One song features a sample of John Lennon talking about the controversy that surrounded him mentioning how much more popular his band seemed to be than Christianity, it doesn't seem to be connected to the rest of the song in any way but there it is. I'm glad these guys have worked hard to do interesting packaging for this demo, they need to work harder on their music now I'd say. They don't seem to be in danger of sounding too much like everyone else, they just need to clarify and polish what they're doing. —b

J. Bartsch, Laerchweg 1, d - 86971 Peiting, Germany

Unrest "demo cassette": This is a European band who won me over right

Youth Strike Chord "Tools For Revolution" demo: Fuck, this is crushing! Noisy, blurry, hyperspeed old-fashioned hardcore with the craziest, most uncompromising vocals I've heard in a long time and songs that don't let up at all. The singer sounds so mad, so remorseless, he reminds me how great this genre can be. He blows every other singer in these demo reviews away, I'm sure of that. The drums and guitars form a big mess of violence and distortion, thanks to the muddy mix, and it's awesome, you can tell what's going on just enough to feel run over as if by a speeding motorcycle. The lyrics are good, a little loose in the grasp of English ("what do you angry for? What do you fear?" "you think you're a rebel, you're not threat at all, you think you're a rebel, you can't shit at all!"), but it's endearing. Oh, god, is the address not on the packaging? Fuck!! OK, they're from Japan, they'll probably get a record out soon, find it somehow, because this is an incredible demo. Sorry I can't find the fucking address! —b
somewhere in Japan

Hey there, kids. Brian is losing it. Donations to cover the cost of his mental therapy will be accepted at the Atlanta address. Requests for the Youth Strike Chord demo will be accepted at the following Japanese address: Hirofume SAKAUE; Mukasoi 1058, Hashimoto; Wakayama 648-0025; JAPAN. Thanks a lot! Love, Gloria C.

DEMO REVIEWS

away with the fact that they describe themselves as "straight edge hot jazz emo punk". In addition, they sing in German, and one song in French, and NOT in English. In fact, to get the English translations of their songs, you have to send away to their address for them. This tape's music consists of chaotic noise...sounding like the result of a room full of musicians who have just switched instruments to try each others for the first time at a jam session. As such, the sound and style is raw and strangely appealing, although rough and unpolished. Sound quality is four track at best, but I have the feeling that it went right to tape, without a recording device, onto a tape recorder of some kind, which also oddly enough tends to accentuate the improv segments of the music rather than distracting from them. Without the lyrics in front of me, I can try to describe the content as best I can from inference and graphics alone but I want to give apologies in advance to the band and to readers if I am inaccurate in any way. This appears to be an anarchist band, and they have taken the time to fill their photocopied insert with graphics depicting revolution. In fact, the only English words on the tape, other than the title are the definitions of the words "revolution" and "revolutionary" which appear reprinted from a dictionary. Good to see those words printed in English. Maybe some Americans will take note (subtle cynicism is detected in the background somewhere...). I liked this tape a lot actually, especially the last song, which came out and was gone in an instant, Los Crudos style. Find it if you can. My copy is numbered 10 out of 100. JUG

Custom Records; Bachstr. 11; 32756 Detmold; Germany?

"Asian Punk Lives" compilation tape: A tape compilation from the Far East, featuring two or three songs each from ten bands. It starts with Argue Damnation, which have the same fast music and messy mix of Youth Strike Chord, only worse, and their screaming singer isn't as good. They add a second guy with a deep voice on the second song, that makes it more interesting. They're followed by the slower, messier, older-fashioned punk rock of Human Waste from the Philippines. This is the most feedback-drenched, most nearly unlistenable recording I've heard in a little while. At least their liner notes are endearing (they write about what kinds of music they have been listening to, and mention that their first demo was called "Immature Bunjee Jumping"). They're followed by New Found Heritage, whose slogan is "hardcore is hardcore!!" and play a funk-inflected breed of simple newer-fashioned hardcore. The next recording, Social Outrage, is live and messy yelled punk, not too clear, but not as difficult to bear as Human Waste. That side of the tape ends with the much clearer silly sugar-sweet pop punk of the Pregnant Men, who beg "don't turn away from me," but god, it's impossible not to. Beginning the next side, Disobedience sets a possible record for distorted, indecipherable recordings. What I hear doesn't sound bad at all (maniacal shrieking, fast punk noise, old-fashioned punk guitar solo) but I'm not able to hear much I can make sense out of. The Abrasive Relations first song alternates between singing over an old-fashioned fuzzy punk guitar line and a melodic guitar lead; perhaps it's the sort of thing you could have found on the Peace comp. years ago? Their second song is a hilarious Christmas carol of a song, played to the tune of "If you're happy and you know it clap your hands," with lyrics that go on like this: "you can stab me in the back but I won't die, you can batter me really hard but I won't die, you can even use cyanide or you can set me on fire but whatever you do remember I won't die." OK, we're approaching the end, but first Bench have to play their comparatively clear, melodic punk stuff. One of their songs is a ska version of '80's pop song "Take On Me," for Christ's fucking sake. Beyond Description rescue us for a moment, with their wrecked, noisy roaring punk (lyrics include "even if it should rain pitchforks, rise! more power to your elbow!"). They have a funny recording that makes their drums sound like big empty buckets, but it works in their favor. The final band is the Bollocks from Malaysia, who have more energy and speed than I expected, not so bad after all. Overall I didn't get too much out of this tape, but it's great to see d.i.y., internationally cooperative efforts like this. —b

Sprout records c/o Tsuyoshi Konno, 1-10-27



Layouter's final word: Looking over Editor D's reviews, particularly the Talk Is Poison and a few others, I have a feeling we share ideas on originality and expression that are closer than our opening statements would imply. I think a combination of originality (which should be manifested in every individual anyway, after all, we aren't all clones yet) and expression are important for making really worthwhile music. There are bands (like Voorhees) that draw on another band's formula (NA, in this case) but raise the intensity level to the point that they can stand out on their own. However, there are also bands that only tap into a past formula (complete with fashion identity bullshit) to posture (too numerous to mention). Fuck that, hardcore gave me the inspiration to keep standing on my own and not to seek out a group of people that dress and think and act and listen to the exact same music as I do. And to the "anti metal youth crew" kids, "Bringing It Down" was so metal it might as well have been Metallica when it was released, you don't have any idea what you're talking about. So I think both myself and Herr Editor want to see some fucking fury in both the music and the people performing it, quit posing and wasting everyone's time. The constant hardcore to metal to hardcore cycle keeps everything fresh and vital rather than stagnant, so I suppose I can't complain about the complaining too much. Argh, this is turning to shit, all I've done is lay out reviews for three days, I can't think coherently anymore....

Reading ZINE REVIEWS

A.T.R. #2: This is fucking where it's at, right here. This is exactly and flawlessly the 'zine I was waiting to see come out of the hardcore community this year: it's super politicized, deals with abstract and specific issues without ever getting boring or alienating, and above all, passionate and inspiring, very human. The first issue of this 'zine had only one of those qualities: it was intellectual, that was it. There were places in which the writers tried to put themselves forward as human beings, but it was always lost behind the fog of unintelligible (if not nonsensical) language, abstraction to the point of vacancy, and horrible photocopying. This one... well, I haven't seen a 'zine this special since Icarus Was Right. Contents run the spectrum from explicitly political to intensely personal, but the political stuff is all about people in the end, not ideologies, and the personal stuff never loses its edge of analysis and self-awareness. Included, for example, are journal entries from Erix experiences (in a disintegrating love affair and as a survivor of a hate crime), discussions about gentrification (and our role in it as punks/artists) and masculinity/competition, Erix manifestos on such things as how to teach "radically" ("to be teacher AND class clown"), and why we need to replace the mass media rather than try to use it, and the other half of the Dennis interview Eric did that appeared a few pages ago in this issue (illustrated by a pull quote—"I think revolutionary people are romantic"—and an old illustration, Don Quixote jousting at windmills). Even the layout is lovely, sober and restrained yet classy and stylish. And as I read the final words, a promise to and from all of us to live, to overextend ourselves into life and explode out the other side into new worlds of freedom and passion, written in a poetry that I didn't think Eric or anyone else was capable of, I feel that this is the most beautiful and complete 'zine I have ever read. Complete, like a living organism: with a vibrant pulse, wide open eyes, a razor-sharp brain, and, right in the center where it belongs, the heart. I closed the back cover and stood up, renewed in mind and spirit, ready to go out into the world and overthrow empires, to slay princes and rescue dragons. —b
Eric Boehme, 118 Raritan Avenue, Highland Park, NJ 08904

Alliance #1: If I say this is one of those unsure newsprint first issues, with writing and layout unpolished, and general mission as yet undefined, will you know what I'm talking about? They've only become common in the last couple years, but they all share some common features: small review sections (this one has a typical 9 'zines, but an impressive 40 records) of erratic quality (case in point: one reviewer says Endstand sounds exactly like a faster Earth Crisis!!!), interviews done in pizza

Burn Collector #8: It is my opinion that Al Burian is the best narrative writer in the punk underground today. His prose is so spirited, so masterful, so full of pathos and subtlety, that I'd put his work on a level with my favorite authors of all time (Henry Miller, William Burroughs, Jeanette Winterson, although Al has more in common with the first). This (along with the earlier B.C. issue that chronicled the greyhound bus trip of epic proportions) is his crowning glory to date, establishing him firmly as the successor to Cometbus in this genre of the 'zine world. In 'zine terms, this is the length of a paperback novel, recounting Al's various adventures, misadventures, and non-adventures during his most recent stay in Portland, Oregon. Um, looking at what I've written so far, this review seems ridiculous, and you're probably incredulous, so the only choice I have is to try to let Al's writing speak for itself:

When he tells jokes he delivers them flatly, never scanning the room for reaction or reveling in whatever social one-up they might give him. He's a workman, matter-of-fact, or, in another sense, superheroic: it's like God gave him a power he never wanted, the X-ray ears which allow him to hear the implicit punch lines of life, and he recites them, but almost grimly, as if he's an ancient oracle who can't help but tell us what's written on the cave wall, knowing we'll probably cut his head off one day for giving us what we asked for.

No time to waste. I've a town to be run out of. "I'm sorry about this!" I scream through the murk at Andrew. "What?" He screams back. I turn over a table, spilling bottles of half-swilled warm beer everywhere. I jump on a chair, and then tackle Holzgum's hapless housemate, wrestling her to the ground. Then up on a table and dance maniacally—people are enthused, no one gives a fuck. It is impossible to crack these people. You can set their houses on fire, disseminate genital herpes, kill their pets, nothing affects them. It all just makes you more the kind of person they want to know. It makes you great to have at parties. I'm struggling in quicksand. The more I try to alienate them, the more I try to engineer my own social downfall, the more parties they invite me to. Maybe they're one step ahead of me, reverse-psychologizing me. I have to admit, it's about the worst punishment I could receive.

—b
Al Burian, 307 Blueridge Road, Carrboro, NC 27510
Burn Collector #9: This is a more pensive Al, a more philosophical Al, a very seasonal Al, just right for gloomy winter days (figures Inside Front couldn't bring it to you in a more timely manner). Still cynical, still eccentric (or maybe just weird), but not the wild romp of slightly depressed hilarity we have sometimes seen before. This issue includes more tales of landlords, bad rock music, Reagan, and Greyhound trips with bizarre busmates, all of which are apparently fundamental parts, if not of all of our lives, certainly of Al's. The storytelling is strong, as usual, although it feels a little unfocused at times. This is an entertaining, self-mocking, reflective, and startlingly enough, finally life-affirming journey through the mazy pre-dawn streets of Al's head, sometimes disorienting, sometimes profound, sometimes just what you needed. —@
same address as the other Burn Collector

parlors with bands like (in this example) the Bouncing Souls, and wandering columns by the apparently very young. In a surprise move, this one also includes a couple pages of poetry. The other interviews include Kill Your Idols, Shutdown, and Inside, and Scott from Tripface writes a piece about why he left the band. There's nothing in here that really grabs me (except for Adam's remarkably candid column about a disastrous afternoon with his girlfriend, which happens to perfectly describe countless afternoons I've spent myself)... but I don't want anyone to think I'm negative or critical of 'zines like this existing. In fact, I'm thrilled they do... the only way to learn how to write, or do anything, for that matter, is by doing it, and 'zines like this are the training grounds for the writers whose 'zines I will be enjoying next year. I hope. Prove me right, Alliance. —b

Alex Lichtenstein, 119 West Third Street, West Islip, NY 11795

Camp Vomit #1: Little tiny 'zine about life as a staffer at a park. It includes one comic (psychedelic, near-indecipherable artwork, low on storyline, high on weirdness, plot left unresolved for next issue) and one article (about the summer all the fish died and the staff had to clean them off the top of the lake). This is a first issue, and it's correspondingly rough in all regards. —b
Phil, 325 Palm Street, Canton, IL 61520

Days Anew #1: This is a great first issue. One of the best and funniest things about it is the radical/political articles (one is entitled "A Brief Look Into Our Civilization," another defuses the myth of representative "democracy"): they deal with all this serious stuff, capitalism, hierarchy, etc., but they're illustrated with photos of hardcore kids jumping around with guitars! This sort of underlines the hilarious juxtaposition of serious analysis and youthful rowdiness in our community, and I get a kick out of it. The article about multinational corporations is followed by photos from Nike sweatshops, which make the difference between abstractions and real human issues. The interviews (with Sweden's Separation and Refused) go into detail, and the editor doesn't fail to press the bands (without being a jerk) when need be. There's an article in German about Food Not Bombs, and I'm glad to see that starting up in Europe. The layout is gorgeous, artistic and readable at once, believe it or not, and the photos are well-shot too. The only drawback—a tendency here and there towards simplicity, lack of depth—should be gone by the next one. —b

Rolf Thiele, Schnorrenberger Allee 45, 53909 Zulpich, Germany

The Defenstrator #8: (Newsprint, Tabloid size, 8 pgs, free) A great way to communicate within the activist scene, The Defenstrator is packed with tons of informative articles. This issue focuses on

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Mumia, Death Penalty info, Anti-police brutality demos, action against Nike, pirate radio, and more. A much needed voice on issues people should be made aware of, it's great to see something like this out there, free for everyone. If this comes out regularly, I would expect to see a definite positive effect on the activist community, and hopefully more people willing to act for change. This newsletter is based in Philly, but has reports from all over the country, making it valuable to just about everyone. Ask for a bunch and put them everywhere for all to see. —n

the defenstrator, POB 30922, Philadelphia, PA 19104

Dial Tone #3: Interesting, if sometimes vague or incoherent, or both, political/social/cultural discussions, very much from the author's perspective. Although it's not thorough analysis or very focused, it's got some good parts. Plus, it made me get in a debate with one of the line cooks at work on Heidegger, good and evil, and whether or not an atheistic world—a better tomorrow, as Dave would have us believe. The main thing that bothered me about *Dial Tone* was that it didn't seem to bring up anything we didn't already

know. Coca-Cola controls the world, our two-party system is a joke, religion is dumb? It just doesn't seem to push these ant farther, or to put much of a new spin on things. Perhaps I'm demanding too much of him—but if I could tell where he was headed, I might know what it is fair to ask of him. Still, the lightly cynical humor and the ideas themselves are worth taking a look at, to refresh your memory if for nothing else. —@

Dave Laney, PO Box 94, Chapel Hill, NC 27514

Dogprint #11: (Offset, Full-size, 80 pages, \$4 ppd) I'm not sure if I've read Dog Print before, but I've certainly heard of it. Nonetheless, I am impressed with this issue and am glad I got to review it. The layout and pictures in here are amazing, the interviews and column are both interesting and insightful, and overall this looks like a very mature zine. Interviews include Three Studies for a Crucifixion, Slap a Ham Records, Amber Inn, and Refused. You could really tell from the interviews that they were done in a friendly environment, and therefore they seem more like real conversations than the normal back and forth stale Q&A I'm used to seeing. This issue also includes a Laceration/The K Shipley 7" ep, which was not sent to me, so without having heard it I probably shouldn't comment on it should I? —n

Dogprint, POB 2120, Teaneck, NJ 07666

Eloquence of a Pariah #1: OK, this is another hardcore 'zine, and it fits the bill as such; but since it's one of the last five before I'm finished with the issue, let me use this opportunity to ask: does there really need to be one more formulaic hardcore 'zine? Why more interviews, scene reports and record reviews? Sure, there should be some 'zines that do this stuff... but there should be lots of other 'zines that do lots of other stuff, and those are sorely lacking. It seems like the people who want to do interviews, scene reports, etc. should arrange to do them for the 'zines that exist for that sake, and everyone else should concentrate on finding new ways to break the mold, before it breaks us. Anyway... this one fits the mold well enough, with record reviews (Morning Again and Cave In are among the editor's favorites), scene reports (from Singapore, which I guess is still a little surprising in a 'zine from the Western hemisphere), interviews (Skycamefalling, Enemy of the Sun [formerly Kindred], Nora, Hans of Liar, the guy who does that solo militant vegan band Statement, and Andromeda from Florida), and a decent computer layout. The interviews are smoothly executed and usually reflect something of the interviewees' personalities, although they don't venture into any really profound territory. I'd just like to see more unusual, unpredict-

able content. The title of the 'zine itself seems to promise more than was delivered this time; maybe next time this 'zine will offer us the confessions and indictments of our pariahs... that sounds more interesting to me... --b

Weimortels 73, 3920 Lommel, Belgium

The Fifth Goal #1: (Photocopied, Half-size, 40pgs, no price) What "the fifth goal" is, according to this zine, is the one goal we as humans are able to pursue with our large brains. The four other goals... eating, sleeping, mating, and defending comprises the whole of animal life and most of human as well. So ultimately the fifth goal is to question our existence, which is done in this zine with the reiteration of Krishna's transcendental bravado. The writing in here is fairly dry and second hand rhetoric, which is not too terrible to listen to, but I'd rather just read a book by the holy swami himself so I can see all the crap people leave out when they restate their principles. What I'd rather see, if someone is going to write about Krishna consciousness, are stories about attempted deprogrammings, the alienation from society, or even how Krishna consciousness was personally found and accepted within that person's life. After all, the end product of questioning existence should be to live your life according to the answers you find, right? In doing so, tell the rest of the world what you experienced, rather than giving us a lecture. —n

The Fifth Goal, POB 970085, Orem, UT 84097

Formula #4: This is a somewhat rough-shod but attractive 'zine of the super-artsy variety... for example, it arrived sealed shut by an abstract color photograph sticker, giving it an aura of profound secret and mystery. Inside there are a lot of fairly abstract photographs and images, some powerful, some too blurred by the mediocre copy quality to work. There's an interview with Ian from Fugazi that is perhaps the best I've ever read with him (and interviews with him are almost always really interesting), it makes this 'zine worth reading all by itself. I can't even begin to describe all the important subjects that are touched on in this interview, with such insight and restraint... The interview is followed by a great piece of terrifying prose (evoking the formless horror of being anonymous, invisible, lost in a hostile world that you can't pin down, describe, define...) In addition to that, there's a (shorter) interview with the guy from Vermin Scum, and a heartfelt (if illegible) paragraph extolling

Contrascience #6: At this point, Contrascience is basically the punk-made textbook for punks who want to educate themselves thoroughly on traditional political issues. I'm glad such a thing exists, and if you're up to it, you probably could stand to get a lot out of this. Articles in this issue touch on the prison-industrial complex, prison life itself, and the national forests of the U.S. There are history pieces on the Minneapolis truckers strike of 1943 and the misdoings of president Woodrow Wilson. Bryan also includes a journal from the days he was considered and rejected for jury duty, interviews with Chris from Mountain records and three other guys (one of whom sings for Los Crudos, yeah) about their experiences as schoolteachers with punk backgrounds, and an eyewitness account of Cuban life. It ends with a letters section in which Bryan and a man jailed for alleged sexual abuse of a child go back and forth about the issue of pedophilia. The layout and multicolored printing are really beautiful, by the way. Constructive criticism? I couldn't possibly tell Bryan how to do this better, he's doing a great job. My only remark would be that the very traditional handling of political issues and politics itself doesn't help to bring in kids who presently feel alienated from all things political and don't understand how relevant this stuff is to their lives. Contrascience should work on drawing them in, too, because it has a lot to offer. —b

P.O. Box 8344, Minneapolis, MN 55408-0344

the merits of Drone Theory. —b

P.O. Box 43535, Baltimore, MD 21236

Happy Not Stupid #9: This arrived today, the last day I can write reviews... and it's damn good, so I'm reviewing it, having just barely read most of it, but I can't offer too much detailed criticism. The ideas and perspectives are quite mature (as in both "grown up" and well thought out), which was actually a fucking relief (to read about the lives and ideas of people over thirty makes them seem almost human, makes me feel like I might still be human ten years from now!), and the writing itself is excellent, it draws you through it rather than making you fight syllable by syllable. Most of the best text consists of personal stories, from a subtly anarchist perspective (that becomes more prominent in the straightforward political news/information later on, which I was not as excited about), very open and personable, frank and forthright about sex and romance, awesome. There's a good article entitled "You think murderers should go free?" refuting a common "argument" (misunderstanding? ignorance?) against anarchism, I enjoyed that too. Reading this guy (and the better examples of the letters section) writing so frankly about his life, talking about real life things that happen every day rather than abstractions, not even trying to simplify them, just letting them be what they are, without failing to maintain a level of insight and analysis, was awesome.

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The book/zine reviews were exemplary, too; I would like to direct a few editors of almost-really-good 'zines to this section, to show just how useful and interesting reviews can be. —b

P.O. Box 8145, Reno, NV 89507

Holy Noise #3: Swiss 'zine with coverage of scenes you don't get to read about in many other hardcore 'zines. Interviews include Natural Mystic 'zine from Argentina (in which the editor talks about why he prints photos of naked women in his 'zine), Spanish band Shorebreak, United Front (a 'zine from Australia... the interview is followed by a scene report from their area), Body Bag (a "ska-core" band from Geneva), Reflections 'zine (the big one from Holland), Drive to Play (the d.i.y. tour booking kids from Switzerland), Cash for Chaos (Brazilian band), Contrition (German underdog metalcore band), and Trial (in which Greg brings us up to date on such Seattle events as the death of Kurt Cobain and the breakup of Soundgarden). The record and 'zine reviews also cover a lot of bands/'zines that you don't see reviewed or interviewed in many European or U.S. 'zines. Near the end there's a travel diary from the editor, that could have been more personal. In addition to all this, there's a manifesto from a group called the "Sense of Guilt" collective, calling for an all-out assault on capitalism and offering ways to go about this. It's a good article, and I'm entirely sympathetic to their goals... although I thought it was funny when they said "we want to centralize the struggle against all authority"! —b

Renaud Meyer, impasse des jumelles 17, 1287 Laconnex, Switzerland

I Hate The World That I Think Hates Me #2: Hilarious title. I've seen a much older 'zine done by this guy, and this one is so much better. I mean, this is a really good 'zine! Not infrequently, I get some abysmal Second Nature-clone 'zine in the mail with reviews worse than the ones we always hated MRR for (and worse English than my letters from Malaysia, though it's inevitably done by a kid from New Jersey) and it almost makes me want to smash up my Judge records and give up on the vast potential of hardcore. This is the antidote I need those days: the writing is good, lots of it, with a really personal atmosphere, so you feel like you get to know the editor as you read... but it's not entirely self-absorbed, it has everything to do with the rest of our community and the world. The 'zine begins with an article refuting various headline claims and doctrines, and continues with an article about the working/living conflict. At the center of the 'zine is a diary of two weeks of travel, music, and adventure in the editor's life, which is executed well enough to be interesting, and it's followed by more articles: critiques of the way our society constructs our sexuality and gender roles, the value of egalitarian discussions, plenty more. There's even a tiny letters/responses section. The reviews are excellent, he does a really impressive job of describing both music and 'zines. It's from Sweden, so of course there's a very serious consideration of the artistic merits and shortcomings of the new Garbage record right next to the review of the HeartattaCk #10 compilation LP, but that's a part of what they have going on up there... The English here is almost always perfect, occasionally there was an error that confused me for a moment, but otherwise, yeah, this is a top notch little

'zine. —b

Andreas Hagberg, Fjardingsmannav. 15, 643 32 Vingaker, Sweden

Stand Alone #11: I was a little hesitant at first, because I had the impression that this 'zine set the standard for standard, by-the-numbers late '90's straight edge 'zines... but I did find things to enjoy in it after all. The best feature is the interview with Kent from Ebullition, who always has interesting things to say (here he talks about his worst skating accident, and why it's not really

progressive to try to get McDonalds to serve vegan burgers, among other things); he sets a standard of maturity and perseverance that all of us would do well to follow. The other interviews range from fairly interesting (Dan of Kid Dynamite, who talks about his experiences playing in punk bands over the last 10 years) to sort of interesting (Scott of Buried Alive, who tells a heartwarming story about the kids from Next to Nothing giving his band 7"s to sell so they could break even on their tour, but kind of panics when he's asked what hardcore means to him) to not so interesting (a Louisville band called Out, who deny that music can ever have a social impact and say of Los Crudos and Drop Dead "I could never listen to a band like that" ...basically, they seem like they want to rock out for the sake of rock, but I'm not convinced that they're up to doing that, even, from reading this). The By the Grace of God tour diary was really interesting, it captured some of the weirdness and excitement and frustration of touring, and should also provide good evidence of why hardcore bands shouldn't tour with pop punk bands. In addition to all that stuff, there's an article about how people from the hardcore community have integrated themselves into the working world which features a fair number of perspectives, though none of them particularly radical, and doesn't offer much useful advice or analysis about how to take what you love about hardcore and apply it to the rest of your life. That's an important topic, I wish it was addressed more in 'zines, and a few paragraphs from Civ about how he can do what he wants because he's a tattoo artist (but most other people won't be so lucky) is not enough. Back to the contents... I don't relate to a lot of the reviews ("any band that names its CD "Recognize" has to be good") but there are a few good lines here and there ("these guys make Ernest Hemingway seem like a well-adjusted individual"). The layout can be a real draw-

Fucktooth #23: If you read 'zines to get new ideas and perspectives, if you want to read intelligent, eloquent writing in your 'zines, if you think punk should be about *everything* in your life, not just your music, then Fucktooth is probably among the top five prospects for 'zines you should be reading. There's far too much here for me to comment on all of it, and it's all done so well... in the opening essays section, Jen touches on death (and the things it forces us to face), crushes/sex/love/friendship relationships (that's always been a really important thing about Fucktooth, that it has addressed this aspect of our lives, which so many other 'zines neglect despite its universal importance), body image, materialism in punk rock (example: the private MRR record collection), and plenty more. Her writing is not too traditionally leftist/boring (like Contrascience and Retrogression can be), it's not too intellectual/elitist (like A.T.R. #1 was), it's perfectly accessible and even laid out nicely. There's a large section in which she goes into the sordid details of her falling out with MRR, which I felt like most of her readers could have been spared, but the part of it that describes her impressions of San Francisco is great (it would have worked great as a part of our new "scene report" project in this issue). She continues her interviews with inspiring kids from our community by talking to Mark Murrman, Alex Coughlin (editor of Dwgsht 'zine, master hiker, and working class hero—this interview is awesome, too!), Kevin Zelko (who writes about his experiences working at a shelter for gay and lesbian youth), and Irwin Swirnoff (All the Answers 'zine). Probably the very best feature of this issue comes near the end; it is a manifesto from the Teen Army, which I've never heard of before, featuring such classic lines as this: "The cheerleader is a symbol of power and beauty that has been wrongly used to support male athletics." "The cheerleader gives physical and emotional support. Her thighs inspire great hope or great fear. She can caress her sister or strike with lightning fury." Awesome! At the very end, there are book and 'zine reviews (good coverage, but the reviews themselves could be more descriptive and detailed in some cases) and a resource guide for others who want to do 'zines, etc. —b

Jen Angel, P.O. Box 353, Mentor, Ohio 44061

back. It's often neither clear or creative. But we all know how hard it is to get dependable graphics help... —b

P.O. Box 321, Buckner, KY 40010

In Case of Breakdown #4: (Photocopied, Half-size, 36 pgs, no price) I'm not sure exactly what to say about this one, it didn't interest me much at all. This definitely has a personal feel to it, and I can see some merit in that, but sometimes people really don't have anything new or interesting to say. I don't know if that's because some people are boring, or because we'd rather stick to what we think will be accepted within the confines of punk as a subculture. I would've loved to have heard about life in Singapore, the HC scene there, and US influence on the country, but I guess Prit would find that boring to him. Prit discusses issues such as Emo, new school HC, aliens, and growing up. Also included are two interviews with a couple Singapore

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metal bands, whom didn't seem to have much to say. All in all I suppose this might hold some interest if you live in Singapore, or are a friend of the author. —n

Prit c/o I.C.B., BLK 263, Bishan St.22, #04-269, Singapore 570263)

Innocence Regained #2: Photocopied, Half-Size, 40 pages, Free?) This is the sort of zine I'd expect to see more of from the HC/Punk scene. It seems like a real rarity to find zines like this coming from a movement where an individuals opinions and viewpoints can be shared freely without removing the individual from the equation. I really enjoy reading zines that lets me see how political/social issues are dealt with on a personal level and how they affect someone's life. Topics explored include mass transit, cops, work, rape, straightedge, living in the city, and more. Innocence Regained is what happens when people wish to express themselves without having to worry about making a pretty zine, what you get is a zine that seems much more real. Issue #3 will be a split with Negative Burn, which could already be out. —n

Innocence Regained, POB 13274, Chicago, IL 60613

Interbang #7: (Newsprint, Full-size, 62 pages, 2 bucks) Out of all the zines I received to review, this is my favorite without a doubt. Straight forward political commentary and articles, no fluff or pomp in here. You can really tell Ben put a lot into this issue, it's got just about everything you could want. He interviews Red Guard from the Urban Guerrilla Poets, in which he gives us his world view and an interesting account of a David Duke protest in Cleveland. Ben's writings are always clear, to the point, and from the heart. He talks about everything from Homophobia to Hardline, from non-monogamy to hip hop. Ben's passion for activism and change really comes through on every page and I highly recommend this to anyone. Apparently number 8 will be the last issue of Interbang, but according to Ben, we can expect future projects from him. —n

Interbang, POB 671, Ravenna, OH 44266

Jesus Come Back #1: Don't be fooled by the title... this is basically a 'zine about hating the Promise Ring (the first thing I read in it was that the original title was "Jesus Come Back and Rid This Fucking Earth of the Promise Ring). That's not the *only* thing in here, of course; that's just the recurring theme throughout what is otherwise a small, traditional (but not poorly done) hardcore 'zine. The first column is pretty fucking funny, an entirely straight-faced commentary on the (now very tired) trend of hardcore bands/labels ripping off their logos from big corporations, that reveals how stupid the whole thing is without having to say so. The better two of the remaining four columns touch growing older without growing apathetic and being a hardcore kid in the marines. There's a press-packet-style "profile" on the Mr. T. Experience (that even the editor notes is out of place at best), a Jimmy Eat World interview (in which the interviewer rightly grills the band on why they chose to work with a major label), a few record reviews, some ads (including one for the Cincinnati Academy of Design?!), and a Make-Up profile (I wish there was more to this one...). And maybe in the end it turns out they don't hate the Promise Ringers that much (not as much as they hate Boy Sets Fire and Falling Forward!), since they do run a movie trivia quiz with them. -b

524 Hudson Ave., Millford, OH 45150

Love Eternal Lost Infernal #4: The tough guys speak. In this case, it is the Italian tough guys, and they don't seem nearly as incoherent as the US ones do when they try to do 'zines. And perhaps it is really unfair of me to call them "tough guys," since they didn't choose that name for themselves... but it's hard not to, because even though their actual explanations of why wind-mill dancing, etc. belong in hardcore seem well-reasoned enough, they're preceded by phrases like "or you'll be 6 feet under, fruit!" (it's worth remembering who brought the word "fruit" into hardcore: One Life Crew) and followed by "how to" articles advising mobs of straight edge kids to beat (preferably ten on one!) punks who dance wrong to a bloody pulp. You know, I don't actually think the guys who do this 'zine mean to come off violent and

fascist; I just think they haven't yet figured out that you can be anything in hardcore but a tough, macho guy without joining the ranks of the pretentious emo kids they despise so much. There are other options (you don't have to just choose between the two "name brands" of identity available in our scene), and if they really mean what they say about supporting "positive and creative" things, I'm sure they'll eventually move on from the violent dancing issue and bullies' language to more important issues. Anyway, in addition to the content I've referred to, there are columns about animal rights, the way work exhausts you and makes it hard for you to spend much time pondering, some short reviews, and short interviews with Disciple and Legion. There also seems to be a disproportionate number of ads in here. —b

Antonio Gnani, Vicolo del Forno, 4, 43044 Collecchio, Parma, Italy

Mad At The World #1 (Newsprint, Full-size, 48pgs, \$1.50): Lots of interviews in here, so I'll just list them first: Agnostic Front, Breakdown, The Templars, Slapshot, Awkward Thought, Bottom of the Barrel, The Degenerics, The Subjugated, Nekhai Naatza, Oppressed Logic, and Tribal War Records. These interviews make up about two-thirds of the entire zine, which leaves little room for much else. The interviews themselves were only mildly interesting, and after you've read your sixth interview, it seems like a chore to get through the rest. Interviews are probably my least favorite part of any zine, and I

usually only read ones where people actually have something to say, which is usually not often. Zines for the most part advertise themselves on what bands they have interviews with, and usually those interviews are the main focus of a zine's existence. I think this is probably do to how much emphasis we put on music in hardcore, instead of what we're trying to express with that music. While I think it's important that people interview these bands/labels/zines to allow them to elaborate on what it is they're expressing, it shouldn't consume the entire zine itself. "Less is more" can definitely be said about interviews in zines and certainly about band interviews in particular. And if you still insist on including a lot of interviews in your zine, why not add variety and interview a broad spectrum of people? What

The Long Walk Nowhere: This is another comic by Al who does Burn Collector, and it's fucking awesome, just as good as B.C., if even more depressing. The first part ("The Metal Years") is hilarious, it chronicles Al's youth as an "unreconstructed metalhead," alienated from a world that seemed itself to be "bursting at the seams with cancer," struggling with the sordid humiliations of teenage dating, loitering and setting fire to things in the desolate streets of suburban America. The second part finds Al in those same streets, years later, wondering what he's still doing there. He walks us around them, giving us a 4 a.m. guided tour of his town in all its vacant glory, steadily becoming more despondent and incoherent. The artwork is appropriately bleak and understated. —b

Migraine, P.O. Box 2337, Berkeley, CA 94702

about that "crazy" guy on your street corner that yells at you when you walk by? What is he so mad about? What about that kid sitting in the corner of the club? Maybe he has something interesting to say. Hardcore is not made up solely of bands, zines, and labels, there are individuals that are involved in different ways whose viewpoints are just as valid, but not heard nearly as often. Don't feel you need to fill your zine with interviews simply because that's what people do, write about what interests you and people will still want to read it, regardless if it has one less band interview in it. —n

Mad At The World, c/o Dan Scheme, 10 Garvey Dr, Jamesburg, NJ 08831, USA

Make Your Own 'zine #3: I'm going to admit something. Although I've found a lot of exciting stuff going on in faraway places like South America and Eastern Europe, I've had a harder time finding things I'm really thrilled about in the Asian hardcore scenes. Either the kids there haven't quite found their stride yet, or else I'm just getting the wrong stuff from them. I know it's probably harder to be involved in hardcore there than anywhere else... anyway, the exceptions usually come from the Philippines, and this is one of them. Not only are the ethics of the editors fucking right on (they also do a distro called "make your own distro," and spread d.i.y. ethics with everything they do), but there's a wide variety of international perspectives in here that anyone could stand to learn from. There's a lot of emphasis on environmental and animal rights issues in here, as one of the main goals of this 'zine is to raise awareness of that subject in the Philippines (there's a "scene report" included here on the young animal rights movement in the Czech Republic, too). One of the better features on that subject is a guide to d.i.y. first aid for pets. There's also an article entitled "The Modern Filipino Woman," which discusses the emerging self-sufficiency and assertiveness of Filipino women and the cultural backlash against it... later, there's an article by Carissa (of

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USA 'zine Screams From Inside) detailing the history of prostitution in the western hemisphere and offering a proposal for how it should be legalized and regulated for everyone's safety. Interviews include a really interesting, in-depth exchange with Chris of BCT (a USA punk tape-trader who's been active since the early '80's), a really short one with Filipino band Santilmo, and another with an anarcho-punk band from Hong Kong called Blackbird. There's a scene report section (mostly from the Philippines), and a free classified ad section (like Slug & Lettuce), and to top it all off a "gig review" accompanied by some indecipherable photos, one of which is of a band called "Stupid Egg Piece" (in which one member is wearing a shirt that says "DIY not hard stuff"). Altogether, this helped me broaden my horizons a bit as far as the international punk scene goes, and I'm glad to be in touch with them. —b

M.Y.O. c/o Gani and Adie, 146 A. Dela Cruz St., Tayabas 4327, Quezon, Philippines

Monkey #4: (Full-size, Offset, 91 pages, 2 bucks US) Interviews include Earth Crisis, Mainstrike, Slugfest, Spazz, Disrespect, and Catweazle. These interviews were generally good reads (probably great reads if you like any of those bands), and the band photo's were real nice and clean. The guestwriter's column on Christianity in the Dutch SxE HC scene was the real gem in here though, but most of the other writings were fairly uninteresting and pointless (Monkey's Fashion Corner??). Even though the Earth Crisis interview did very little to change my opinion of them, what made it enjoyable were the arguments the editor brought up to discuss with Karl. We still however see the same aversion tactics used by Karl when asked about his "hardened" lyrics, here's an example, "I think it's kind of bizarre though that lyrics like that are viewed upon as harsh." What?!! How can they not be when the lyrics spell out a black and white world where "if you refuse to change, then you are guilty and must be destroyed"? People don't eat meat cause they're "evil", the meat and medical industry have a strangle hold on the collective consciousness of America, and ensures we all grow up to be good-natured meat eating citizens. Our culture is being manipulated to the point where people don't know what life to live, and instead follow tradition and what gives them the most temporary pleasure. As long as there's a financial incentive to exploit animals (as well as humans) the process is going to continue, recognizing capitalism and a marketed culture as the great debaser is a far greater accomplishment than demonizing the average American with such ridiculous and absolute logic. —n

Sperminator Productions, Vlassstraat 12.b, 9712 KT Groningen, The Netherlands

Negative Burn #3: OK, this issue is from fall '97, but the kid just sent it to me so I guess he's still doing the 'zine and wants you guys to know about it. It begins with a number of pages of writing from the editor introducing us to himself and his ideas about straightedge, d.i.y., relationships, bureaucracy, homophobia, and some other topics. It's all written from a somewhat young and idealistic viewpoint which is refreshing if not profound. There are three pages of reviews (focusing largely on new school "old school" bands) followed by an interview with North Carolina oldschool band Reinforce, which set the stage for an interview with Nick Baran, the Buffalo new school "old school" hardcore guru. And that's pretty much what we've got here. The mediocre xeroxing quality doesn't usually interfere with reading. —b

205 Bedell Pl., Fayetteville, NC 28314

Nuevo Extremo #4: Este 'zine no lleva mucho (unas columnas, tres entrevistas, y reseñas mediocres), pero es bien escrito en general, e interesante. El que lo escribe, Joao, habla mucho, y si no quieres escuchar mucha información sobre su vida y sus opiniones sobre "la escena" en Santiago de Chile, mejor que no lo leas. No quiero decir que Joao tiene una visión limitada, con un enfoque que incluye nada más que él mismo y su comunidad exclusiva de punks en Santiago. También escribe sobre las contradicciones inevitables en las actitudes, el estilo de vida, y la posición social y económica de cualquier persona que tenga más que medio cerebro, y temas parecidos. Las columnas son buenas también. Lo que no recomiendo es que compréis el 'zine para leer las reseñas. No son insostenibles, pero no son nada especial. No entiendo por qué los 'zines siempre tienen que estar ligados con la música. Si fuera que todos los tíos con 'zines nos estuvieran describiendo entusiastamente sus discos favoritos—eso lo entendería. (O si estuvieran atacando a Ten Yard Fight, como Joao.) Pero incluir unas reseñas sólo porque es el formato típico de

un 'zine, o porque Initial Records se lo pidió, no tiene sentido. Mucho mejor dejarnos con las otras partes de **Nuevo Extremo**, las cuales me gustaron. Espero que tengáis la misma reacción. —@

c/o Joao Da Silva, Casilla 120 Correo 12, La Reina, Stgo., Chile

Paper Tigers #1: (Photocopied, Half-size, 52pgs, \$2) There's a lot of really interesting articles in here, no reviews or ads, just good writings. The first article contained herein is the author's personal opinions on leftists, which he derides for their lack of action and ideological futility. In fact his hatred is so strong that he begs them to, "...hold a gun to the part of your brain that contains your leftist conditioning and pull the fucking trigger". In doing so it seems like he's putting himself in an ideological vacuum, where his own experiences and trials create the whole of his philosophy. He seems to resent them because they haven't grown up poor, needy and in pain like he did. They should therefore stop trying to figure out what the fuck is going on within the context of their lives, and just open themselves to the suffering of the world and learn the hard way. Ok, but I think there are more counter-revolutionary forces out there that deserve your anger and attention than the ideologically paralyzed of the world. Maybe they would be more receptive to your criticism if you didn't tell them to simply kill themselves. It's just a thought.

Anyways, the rest of the articles are captivating enough to make this an overall good read. There's a 13 page piece on the writings and speeches of Lucy Parsons, there's a series of articles on Chiapas, and an article on the connections between Freemasonry and institutional racism in American History. As an added bonus, we get an education on where and what guns to buy, which was interesting to see. Definitely pro-gun, the folks at Paper Tigers are ready to fight for their freedom against those who would steal it. If this sounds appealing then maybe this is the zine for you. —n

Paper Tigers, POB 2945, Tulsa, OK 74101-2945

Placid Island #1: (Photocopied, half-size, 30 pages, 2 stamps) Despite it's size, and the fact that most of the articles were pirated from other zines, I was impressed with the effort nonetheless. Borrowed articles include; "Teach Your Fucking Self" from Profane Existence, an intro to Chiapas from Grundig Fanzine, and the "How Ethical is the Work Ethic" from I.F.#9. These are all great articles, if you haven't already read them. The original articles were intelligently written with personality and just the right amount of cynicism. I was particularly surprised to see an article on H.P. Lovecraft, a pulp-horror writer of the 1920's whom even Stephen King listed as a major influence. If you don't remember his name, then you might remember his most famous creation, the squid-like god Cthulhu from his short story "The Call of Cthulhu". Also included in this zine is a short bio of Lovecraft, which sheds some much-needed light on his life and writing career, although by no means complete. While Lovecraft was an Anglican who at one time praised the Aryan race for it's "vast superiority to the rest of mankind", his writings are virtually devoid of his bigotry, especially those from his later years. "All my tales," he wrote in 1927, "are based on the fundamental premise that common human laws and emotions have no validity or significance in the cosmos-at-large." Lovecraft's stark reality of cosmic alienation, and his ability to illustrate his own madness continues to fascinate me, and I'm glad to see some exposure of him to the HC/Punk community. —n

Placid Island Fanzine c/o Josh Gregal, 290 Chestnut St., Hammononton, NJ 08037

Reality hard core XXX straight edge biuletyn #8 (2): This is in Polish. There's a lot of text in it, including interviews with Congress, All Out War, Racial Abuse, and others, show reviews (including the Italian band Miskatonic University and the fucking great Hungarian band Dawncore), some articles and news from Dischord records (and two other big labels that have even less to do with hardcore than they do). The reviews are quite lengthy and cover a lot of international territory from east to west. The ad's are all for cassettes, since CD players aren't easy to come by in Poland. Looks like a good 'zine serving the Polish hardcore community. —b

Marcin Kopczynski, Chabrowa 12a/15, 44-200 Rybnik 15, Poland

Reskator #1: This is done in the Czech language, to spread information about hardcore in the Czech scene, so the main reason for us to write about it here is to point it out for people in other communities who want to communicate with people there. It's full-size, very "professional" printing and layout, and in addition to a whole lot of reviews includes interviews with Indecision, Ken Olden (of Battery and Damnation A.D.), Ensign, and Sunshine (by far the lengthiest, and with a local Czech band, thank goodness... part of it

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deals with their tour of the USA), a long history piece about Downcast, and an introduction to the ideas behind vegetarianism/veganism. —b
Tomas Mladek, V krovínach 16/1540, Praha 4 – Braník, 147 00, Czech Republic

Retrogression #14: First off, I want to say that Retrogression is a great magazine. It's filled with writing, a remarkable amount of it, in fact, almost all of which is intelligent, eloquent, and challenging. The best thing about Retro is that it makes you think, of course—there are so many claims made, so many positions taken, on so many issues, and with so much energy and assertiveness, that you find yourself constructing arguments and counter-arguments as you read whether you like it or not. Probably the highest point of this issue is the interview with Submission Hold—it goes into a lot of depth about gender issues, among other things, and the members of the band have a lot to say and come across as being really sincere. This interview was done in person, which works out really well (editor Dave spells some of the words according to the band's Canadian accents, which is the sort of personal touch that can make a "political" 'zine like Retro great), especially compared to the interview with the author of "Alice is an Island" 'zine, which was done over the internet and consequently lacks a certain... something. Other important features include the vast letters section (filled with bickering...), the similarly vast collection of smaller essays and thoughts (fuel for more bickering...), and articles including a critique of the so-called International Socialist Organization. There's also a lot of straight political information from a U.S. left-wing/liberal reformist perspective (which senators voted for what bills, etc.), which is less interesting than the rest of the 'zine because it lacks the personality that Dave's other writing has. The reviews are quite long, correspondingly few in number, and were clearly taken seriously, which is important... but I think it makes a lot more sense for them to do 'zine reviews than record reviews, in a magazine like this, and in fact I found their 'zine reviews much more useful.

Now for the constructive criticism... there's a lot of complaining in here about how "dumb" punk kids are, how they don't want to read 'zines (Dave's in particular) and don't care about anything but fashion. Being frustrating with punk rock isn't new, people have been getting jaded and giving up on it for decades. I think this usually stems from expecting punk to do everything on its own to save the world, which of course it isn't going to do. Punk isn't a *deus ex machina*, it isn't an army of superpolitical robots. It's just a bunch of kids looking for something more than mainstream society has to offer, some of them aware of this and making progress coming up with other ideas of how to do things, others not yet sure what they want. Hardcore isn't going to make capitalism and all those other evil forces go away all by itself; but it *is* a great tool you can use to work towards things getting better. It's worth something to have a community where you can talk to other people who are dissatisfied in the first place—communities are hard to come by these days—and if they're not all 'zine-readers and left-wingers, well, that means you're not preaching to the converted, right? Once you realize that punk isn't perfect, but has a lot to offer if you want to bring people together and get them to start thinking about things, you can get over adolescent disillusion and start getting things done. But rather than seeing the apolitical fashion-consciousness of the kids around him as an opportunity to do political outreach to people who need it, Dave just writes them off in frustration. It may indeed be true that he's not having any luck reaching them with Retrogression; but if anything, that just means that (as far as hardcore goes) Retrogression is a failed experiment, and

it's time for him to try something else... because the alternative is just accepting that these kids are always going to be unthinking jerks, isn't it?

Dave even goes so far as to offer hardcore punk as proof that an anarchist society could never work (because us punks allegedly are all such jerks that it's easy to see how hopelessly fucked human nature is) and that we must always have a government to make everything work. Obviously he hasn't gotten to know the hundreds of awesome punk kids I know who work together practically and cooperatively, people who grow their own food together, build their own houses, and always take care of each other. Perhaps if he could look beyond the silliness of the larger punk shows (which have never really been great examples of non-capitalist interaction anyway) to see small-scale anarchism in action in these people's lives, he could get over his cynicism and start to be idealistic enough about our species to not accept bullshit statist clichés about "human nature." Human nature is not set, it is the result of environmental conditioning... and we can make whatever kind of environments we want to, if we try. Rather than just accepting that everything is fucked up and settling for legal squabbles over the mere details of our misery, we need the idealism to seek great changes in our lives. This issue of Retrogression is an example of what happens when you start to let that idealism slide... you get jaded and bitter, and that prevents you from being able to get what you want. —b
P.O. Box 815, Norton, MA 02766

Rumpshaker #4: I've been thinking lately that one of the things our scene really needs right now is more good 'zines, to set an example for younger kids of how hardcore can be more than just music and dancing. I think that some of the really good 'zines we have right now can be intimidating to the younger kids who want to be involved with the counterculture but don't know what the fuck "anarcho-syndicalism" is. Rumpshaker (despite its terminally horrible name) is the 'zine I've been waiting for: super-well written and put together, well-distributed, intelligent and sensitive and politically right on without being overbearing at all. It's a traditional hardcore 'zine, without aspiring to be any more than that, but it's just so well-done that it sets the example I was hoping for. The interviews, for example, are some of the best I've seen, and it's hard to do good interviews. I felt like I learned a lot about CR and Lifetime and why both bands broke up, and I didn't even know I was interested in learning anything about Lifetime! Other bands include Endeavor, Converge, Devoid of Faith... most of these are really extensive and go into a lot of detail. One really awesome interview is with a former cattle rancher who became a vegan environmental activist, that was really inspiring, especially in the otherwise "standard hardcore 'zine" context. There's a lot of hilarious whimsical stuff in this 'zine, too, which is the perfect counterpoint to the more serious stuff: two satirical articles about hardcore (a hardcore "choose your own adventure" game parodying the social rules and rites of the scene, and a comparison of hardcore kids to deadheads), interviews with hardcore "celebrities" and their mothers (Sick of It All, Rick Healey, the Promise Ring guy), and an interview with a professional baseball pitcher who sings in a hardcore band. There are some reviews, of medium length, though not as many as I expected. Throughout all of it, editor Eric keeps a tone of ethical d.i.y. values, without ever raising his voice or sounding preachy. Anyway, yeah, this is great. —b

Eric Weiss, 72-38 65 Place, Glendale, NY 11385

doing. ZINE REVIEWS

Second Nature #7 (Offset, Full-size, 72 pgs, \$2): Interviews with Hot Water Music, Braid, Atom and His Package, and Cave-In. Slick layout with nice graphics and crisp band photos make for an easy read. No real columns in here, though there are a few articles on band & label relationships, how to streak, and a label profile on Hydra Head records. The interviews were fairly interesting, and the articles were likewise, but nothing too earthshaking. If you haven't already seen Second Nature, it might be worth checking out, but it seems like something more like something I'd read in a waiting room than something I'd want to read. This is apparently the "Anonymous" issue, which might explain why this is so boring to read at parts. Too cold and distant for my tastes, but some people like that "Professional" feel that a lot of mainstream HC fanz... oops, I mean magazines are good at. Seems like all this paper and space could be used for a better purpose than this, like political commentary, information on issues we should be aware of, or something completely different like an article on how to streak, oh wait... uh, never mind. I guess you gotta sit through what you don't like till you find the nuggets of delight hidden within. —n

Second Nature address elsewhere

Skinny #12: This 'zine, thank god, is not as whiny as my high school journal was, although it's a similar kind of writing. Melissa, though, is writing for an audience, and is not going to remove her heart from her sleeve just because of that. If you aren't open to her writing, it might strike you as being a little immature, a little self-indulgent, certainly amateur, and prone to funny uses of words and strange metaphors ("You're a crumb, lying on the rug, just hoping to be sucked away to some place more fulfilling and real, via the Hoover"). But the 'zine is full of good ideas, or hints of them, and that makes it absolutely worth it for me. And I'm just glad to see people *doing* things. My favorite part of the 'zine was actually the illustrations, carefully culled from a ridiculous textbook. And Melissa is fully aware of the contrast between her writing and the clinicality of the pictures: "My tears come from pain," she writes next to a diagram of the lachrymal gland. So do mine. Except when I laugh really, really hard. —@

Melissa/Okie Dokie Distro, PO Box 890701, Oklahoma City, OK 73189-0701

Skyscraper #1: (Newsprint, Full-size, 40 pgs, no price [send a buck or some stamps]) Skyscraper seems modeled after zines like Punk Planet and HeartattaCk, but should find it's own style eventually. Apparently this is done by two brothers with a few contributions from various sources, and could probably use more help and input. The great thing about these guys is that they really seem like they want people to give some input and add their own voice to the zine. They really have a good perspective on where they want to go with this, and feel everyone should come along and explore what this can be. Not wanting to limit themselves to the HC/Punk culture, they really want to expand into any and every realm possible, not just interviews with bands and labels. Despite that vision, this issue has interviews with bands and labels, and writings on punk and politics, but with interesting content nonetheless. Interviews include Bottleneck/GSL, Scott from Bloodlink Records, Still Life, and Botch. In the Bloodlink interview, Scott talks about alternative technologies, owning your own house, and talks a bit about how

he's gotten a bad name in some circles in the punk community, which is an interview that is much more interesting than most. The Still Life interview was another good read, they've been around for so long, I'm always amazed they're still going. The writings are of equal appeal as they are original and straight from the minds of the writers. One column examines the business of punk, and attempts to dissect the anatomy of it within a business context. I'm glad to see people finally waking up to the consumer nature of punk as a

subculture, and hopefully we can create more meaningful ways to interact rather than by just selling and advertising to one another. I expect to see a lot more from future issues with a wide variety of writings from everyone who wants to be heard. —n
Skyscraper, POB 4432, Boulder, CO 80306

Slave #2: If this 'zine starts come out more frequently and getting better distribution, it just might be the thing we've been waiting for to keep intelligent/politicized hardcore alive. There's lots of great stuff in here. The best part for me is the running emphasis on the visual arts in punk (from the unique layouts to the punk artwork reprints to the centerfold of political stencil images that their friends put up all over their town). The interview with Boy Sets Fire is OK, but doesn't get really interesting until an argument begins about whether kickbox dancing is always a bad thing. Boy S.F. don't seem very interested in listening to any perspectives that conflict with theirs, there... The other band interviews (Reversal of Man, New Day Rising) are equally, uh, decent. They're not bad or boring, exactly, but it's tough to do really great band interviews! The other stuff is more interesting: a useful do-it-yourself guide to screenprinting, some really educational political pieces (an interview with Greg Jackson of Black Autonomy, introductions to the Regulators [an old American Revolution-era anti-government movement] and the results of the Cuban revolution), and three extensive book reviews (one of the books is by Noam Chomsky, that should give you an idea of what to expect). OK, now advice for how to improve the next one: first, it needs to be organized better. The contents here aren't really arranged by theme or anything else, and it makes it hard to find your way through, let alone pin down a solid response to this issue. And though there are

Screams From Inside #7: This issue focuses on women in the punk community, and to that end it includes interviews/features on eight "big name" active punk women: Vique (Simba records and 'zine), Chris Boarts (Slug and Lettuce), Fly (an excellent cartoon artist, you may know her work from Slug and Lettuce, and more of it is printed here), Adrienne (who sang for Spitboy), Jen Angel (who writes Fucktooth 'zine and used to co-operate MRR), Cindy (writer of Doris 'zine), Stacey Wakefield (who did that excellent book on squatting "Not For Rent," among other things), and Amanda Huron (Impetes Inter, the Stigmatics, etc.). These are all really good, extensive, interesting, and it's fucking awesome for me to read a 'zine filled with women's perspectives. In addition, there's a poem by Wendy O-matik, and a fair bit of writing from the editor and her comrades. All of this is from a well-thought-out anarchist/anti-consumerist standpoint, and it's always reassuring to read a 'zine that reminds me our community is filled with people who are building a coherent critique of everything they're rebelling against.

OK, now my one constructive criticism: while the 'zine reviews are decent and make sense in this context, the record reviews are not only irrelevant to the rest of the 'zine but also disastrously executed. Some of them read like Dan Young's reviews for our last issue, they're so bad (the Boy Sets Fire review is titled "The Day the Sun Went Down," for example!). The worst example of all, a review of the Deaththreat record, which talks about how they don't want to be associated with His Hero Is Gone (but mentions His Hero Is Gone four times, some band I've never heard of called "Deathtrap" six times, and poor Deaththreat not even once!), steals the crown from last issue's Negate demo for most absurd hardcore thing ever. In honor of Negate's timeless hardcore classic "Down For a Smile," we're initiating a new tradition in Inside Front: the Negate box. This review has definitely earned itself a place there. Anyway, despite the music reviews (which could be easily dispensed with), this is a really important 'zine, worth reading for everyone. —b

4434 Ludlow Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104

a bunch of music reviews, and they're not badly written, they don't do any 'zine reviews! There are a fucking lot of good little 'zines out there, and given the content and approach of this 'zine it would make sense for them to have 'zine reviews occupying the middle ground between the book and record reviews. I feel like too many good 'zines concentrate more than they should on record reviews and soliciting records label ads, just to get free CDs and money... that sort of pins our scene down to having to read about fucking Victory bands even in smart d.i.y. 'zines like this, and there's really no need for that. The same goes for the shit record label ad on the back of this issue. Anyway, a new Slave will be out the same week this issue comes out, and I expect it to be better than this one, so definitely write them to get one; as I said, I think Slave will play an important role in keeping hardcore intelligent and effective over the next couple years. —b

P.O. Box 10093, Greensboro, NC 27404

So. Why Worry? #3 (Newsprint, Full-size, 32 pgs, no price): "Straight-Edge

Reading ZINE REVIEWS

Grindcore Hatezine" is the self-description given by the author, but a better description might be "Extreme Music with Personal Rants Fanzine". Lots of band interviews, but there are also quite a few pieces of personal writings, which seem to jump from subject to subject with very little consistency. He

definitely comes across as an easy going guy who just loves his music, which explains the large number of interviews. Ok, so here's the list: Seized, Forced Expression, We Should Die, Disassociate, Opstand, Strong Intention, Hemlock, Brutal Truth, and Seven Foot Spleen. My favorite has to be the Hemlock interview, here I'll give you a taste... Q: How is it determined if one should serve the Dark Master or become fuel to his fire? A: We are NOT enslaved by any "Dark Master", we are Sumerian warriors on a "Satanic Crusade" to destroy the light. Hemlock will come before Christ and MURDER love. All "mosh metal" idiots are fuel to the fire. So are fools who torture animals, ESPECIALLY them.

For those who don't know, the Sumerian pantheon of gods is the one used in the "authentic" Necronomicon, which is probably where they got their names and motif from. I wonder if these guys ever tried to summon one of the gods before, there are instructions in there for it after all. I think that'd be great act to do for a show if they were somehow able to cast some spells and really raise some hell! But alas, all the Priests of Marmaduke are probably too busy entertaining at children's parties and barmitzva's to come and show some HC kids the power of the Ancient Ones. —n

So, Why Worry?, 1107 S. Bruce, Monahans, TX 79756-5511 USA

Status Magazine #7: (Full-size, Offset, 64 pages, Free) Reading this was a real confusing experience. I felt like I was being sent mixed signals, there are some good columns and interviews, some shitty columns and interviews, and a whole lotta ads. In fact, the first thing I noticed after flipping through this was the sheer number of ads, which accounted for about half the total number of pages (maybe that's why it's free). The first few columns were well written, politically minded, and original. The rest of the columns however were pointless, inane, and unjustified in their inclusion. Lots of interviews for the music lovers in here though, including: All, Midvale, Enwetak, Converge, Indecision, Waxwing, and The Judas Factor. Most of the interviews focus entirely on music, with only a few interesting questions here and there. Overall, it's a good read if you like any of those bands, especially since it's free. A few suggestions if I may: focus more on politics, the insight is there, use it; ask interesting questions, don't just talk about music (remember HC is more than music, don't hide the politics in a few columns). I think I'd pay a couple bucks for this if it lost some ads and had some better articles and columns to read. Oh yeah, and there's some record and zine reviews in here too. —n

Status Magazine, POB 1500, Thousand Oaks, CA 91358

Value of Strength #5: (Offset, Full-size, 96pgs, \$4 world) Ok, lets see here... Extinction, All out War, H2O, Liar, One King Down, Clouded, Morning Again... yup, this is a hardcore fanzine. The layout of this is very slick, with nice band

photos and a full color glossy cover, it definitely has a professional look to it. Vegan Straightedge point of view with an honest desire for change will probably make this very appealing to the hardcore mainstream who are always looking for more band interviews, animal rights sermons, and of course pho-

tos of band members looking cool and angry. I'm glad I progressed out of my "Earth Crisis stage", and started seeing the true potential for hardcore as an expression of individuality, instead of another identity to adopt. So I probably didn't enjoy the interviews and writings as much as I might have in the past, but I can definitely see the attraction this will have for others. There's also an interview in here with a member of Upstate Hardline, who does a good job of explaining the philosophy of it's movement, without seeming like a reactionary militant ass like most of them do. Oh well, I suppose if you're new to hardcore, and would rather buy into the stereotypical viewpoints, philosophies, and the pre-set identities that are waiting for you within, this might hold some interest. If you'd rather define for yourself what you think is right or wrong and the limitless potential of hardcore without competing with everyone else for status and image, then save your money. —n

Value of Strength, kloosterstraat 53, 6369 AB Simpelveld, the Netherlands

Vortex #1: Despite years of reading about it in 'zines like this and getting letters from kids, I still don't have a good feel for what is going on in the Singapore hardcore scene. I'm waiting for a 'zine that will help me get a real understanding of what hardcore is like there... This issue is sort of spotty in quality: a mediocre interview with local young band Swan is followed by a much better done column (which wanders between commentary on gender and nationalist issues, Orwell's 1984 and Salinger's Catcher in the Rye), which is followed again by a tiny little interview with Tony of Victory Records (his evasive, three-word answers are about as interesting as you would expect, although it is hilarious that when asked what book has had an impact on his life, he answers "The Road Ahead by Bill Gates of Microsoft!"). There are scene reports from Texas (!?) and Switzerland, more short interviews (Hereafter, the Moderates, Anaconda, all from Singapore), and an article on fighting sexism by the author of the earlier-mentioned well-written column. —b

Andy Leong, Blk 12 Toh Yi Drive, #10-391, Singapore 590012

War Crime #10: (Newsprint, Full-size, 64 pages, 2 bucks) I don't know why I haven't seen this before, I feel like I've been missing out. This issue has a lot pack in it, like info on Jabiluka (a contested uranium deposit on indigenous soil), The 1999 Primate Freedom Tour, curing headaches naturally, as well as updates on various political prisoners and more. This focuses on serious political activism, but still includes record and zine/book reviews. It's definitely refreshing to read a zine without band interviews I'd rather not read, and one that is focused entirely on relevant political news that everyone should be aware of. Expect to hear more from War Crime in the future. —n

War Crime, POB 2741, Tucson, AZ 85702

THE NEGATE BOX

"Deathtrap" review (Screams From Inside #7)

When the Deathtrap kids came to Philly they would not allow us to talk about His Hero Is Gone. You see, Deathtrap has some of the members from His Hero Is Gone and the guys who are not from HHIG get sad because they don't feel part of the conversation. They think to themselves, "What about Deathtrap?" Well, I figure I will let the kids in Deathtrap have their glory just this once. Deathtrap is lively fast hardcore with clear vocals (no growling). There is a hint of His Hero Is Gone in their musical style but really, they are completely different.

¿Conoces algo de la escena española?

—"Parece que la escena española está creciendo todo el tiempo. He visto buenos 'zines de España y he oído algunas buenas bandas. Espero que esto continúe. Hay mucha gente hispano parlante en Chicago, los españoles son grandes personas."

(Do you know anything about the Spanish scene? —It appears that the Spanish scene is growing all the time. I have seen good 'zines from Spain and I have heard some good bands. I hope that continues. There are a lot of Spanish speakers in Chicago. The Spanish are great people.)

—Tony Brummel of Victory Records, in a brilliant interview in Cara a Cara #2

Just so Brian doesn't feel alone in a world that doesn't hate Victory Records as much as he does, I will here express my opinion that Tony Brummel is a moron. (Andrea is always trying to turn us into softies, and she suggests that "moron" is a bit harsh.) Look at what he says, though! He says, "I don't know anything specific about Spain (in fact, I'm convinced either that Spain is a small country between the US and Mexico, or that for some reason Chicago's Hispanic population is not actually made up mostly of Latin Americans), but I'm guessing that you guys have 'zines and bands there. However, I have a reputation to uphold, so instead of admitting that Americans as a whole are totally ignorant about Spain and Spanish hardcore, I will say something really stupid instead." I hope the whole world realizes exactly what is going on with... no, instead of going on and on about this, I'm going to stop here. As Brian says, I can't say how dumb he is any better than he could.

Winston Philter

Handing ZINE REVIEWS

Eloquence #3/Wellfair #2 split issue (Photocopied, Half-size, 64 pgs, \$? (one dollar probably)): This is a split zine from two people collaborating across the ocean. Eloquence is from Austria, and Wellfair is from Seattle, and both have their own unique style to them. Wellfair is a travel journal detailing, although not in great detail, Huey's various exploits around Europe and parts nearby. Despite the fact that the order of the pages are all screwed up, which I realized after reading the second half of the journal and coming to the correct starting point, I enjoyed reading this. You can definitely tell that Huey had some amazing experiences while traveling, most of which are beyond words to describe, which is the problem with journals. Unless an author can translate the true magnificence of a trip into words to put in a journal, it almost seems like you're reading a script for some movie. So while Huey didn't do this as well as some might have, he did do it from his heart and from his own mind and it was an enjoyable read because of that.

Eloquence is a different zine altogether from its partner in crime, which gave some variety to the whole thing. This is the more familiar personal type zine with an assortment of writings, reflections, and even an interview with Hal al Shedad. The writings are on various topics of interest to Daniel, and seem to follow a journal type format with some narration of real-life happenings related to the subject.

While I know zines like this might seem a dime-a-dozen, the true value these hold is just in being able to create something from yourself. The simple exercise of one's ability to actualize their individualism through the sharing of personal writings is an intrinsic value often overlooked in HC/Punk, especially when we see so many of them out there. The discovery and exploration of our identities, cultures, and communities seems to me like a very important part of hardcore, so while personal zines like this one might not have appeal to everybody, the role they play in that quest for the self is invaluable.

Eloquence, a.baumgartnerstr, 44/A1/015 Vienna, Austria — Wellfair, Huey Proudhon, POB 95516, Seattle, WA 98145 USA or hueyproudhon@hotmail.com

BOOKS

Against Civilization: Readings and Reflections, edited by John Zerzan (Paperback, 215pgs, \$9.95 (\$11.50 ppd)): Ten thousand years ago, a new culture was born within the fertile lands of the Near East, one that would quickly overtake the world and create a universal standard of life. This culture sought to elevate mankind above his surroundings, above the animals, plants, and habitat with which we had lived peacefully with for millions of years. The world was transformed from a chaotic and wild wondrous place to one of security and order, under the guiding principle that mankind is the pinnacle of creation and evolution. A mask had been created by this culture, one which disguised the earth with the ugliness of cities and the scars of our wars. Now, as we reach the edge of an apocalypse we ourselves have invented, this book hopes to uncover that mask and discover who it is we were and how we got here, before it's too late.

Zerzan takes us through the stages of civilization, painfully forcing us to remember an entirely different way of life, and how we've forgotten it. Through the writings of such authors as Rousseau, Thoreau, Perlman, and the Unabomber, we see a multitude of theories and visions on the inner workings of an all-consuming Leviathan that has pushed us to near self-extinction. While some are a bit esoteric at times, most explain in plain detail the

true nature of civilization.

Understanding that the world was not always the way we see it today, and that it is only within the last fraction of human existence that we have seen these changes, is vitally important in rediscovering and redefining our culture. Although it is prophesied we will ultimately destroy ourselves, it is possible to avoid the seemingly inevitable conclusion of this horrific chapter in human history and begin to write our own. —n

Uncivilized Books, POB 11331, Eugene, OR 97440

The Ugly Duckling #3: This is a great example of a kind of 'zine that our community could use more of: it has a highly personal feel, offers unique coverage of hardcore punk stuff as well as material that isn't exclusively hardcore-related, and a relatively low press run that doesn't prevent the editor from taking it seriously (and, in fact, almost certainly contributes to the "personal" feel of the 'zine). One thing that really works here is that the entire 'zine is written out in Lieve's handwriting, making it almost like a letter. In this age dominated by armies of identical computer layouts, this is a fucking relief to see. And her writing itself is really personable, really open and sincere. The more standard 'zine features here include interviews with Man in the Shadow (a Slovenian band), Fida (a woman who edits a 'zine in Malaysia), and Hans from Liar, and lots of 'zine reviews (which rightly concentrate on lots of great lesser known d.i.y. 'zines). Lieve also includes her thoughts (and those of her friends) on topics like abortion rights, and a diary of her visit to Poland (and accompanying culture shock). The political reflections really work because they're all directly tied to Lieve's experiences and explorations, and the personal stuff works because it's tied in to larger issues. This is altogether a great 'zine.

—b

Lieve Goemaere, Zwaanhofweg 3, 8900 Ieper, Belgium

Carnival Of Chaos: On The Road With The Nomadic Festival, by Sascha Altman DuBrul and others (Paperback, 128pgs, \$8ppd): Originally published as a zine, Scott at Bloodlink thought to publish it all in a spiffy bound book, but still has that crude cut and paste layout that has become the hallmark DIY style. The Carnival of Chaos was an idea conceived within the minds of a group of anarcho-punks in NY city. We are taken from its initial inception through its culmination as a traveling circus of society's drop-outs, visiting city after city and luring other discontents to join in the festivity of life. Things don't go as planned (though there was not much to begin with) however, which is what makes this an exciting read. Sascha and the rest of the sometimes gloomy band of adventurers pull out every scam in the book to keep the merriment going including trainhopping, hitchhiking, dumpster-diving, and whatever else necessary.

While some might consider such an undertaking to be pretentious and overly idealistic, I would hope to see more people gathering together and trying something new and exciting. Whether this was a success or a complete failure can be debated (as I'm sure it has), and even though it

turned out to be something none of the members anticipated, new territory was charted and new worlds were discovered within our lobotomizing Amerikkkan death culture. This is definitely worth reading if you can get a copy, but don't be content on just reading, the ultimate goal is to inspire others to action. This book accomplishes that goal with flying colors. —n
Bloodlink Press, 4434 Ludlow St., Philly, PA 19104 or scottb@martinet.com
Marlin .22 Exotic Weapon System (Paperback, 120pgs., \$20ppd) I'm very suspicious of this company and their publications. Most of their books seem to be intended to take advantage of idiots who know nothing about martial arts by offering to explain the "Eastern Death Touch" in 80 illustrated pages or would-be militia members by offering military information of questionable authenticity at best. The Marlin .22 Exotic Weapons System book offers very detailed (perhaps beyond the comprehension of most people without engineering experience) machinist's drawings, photographs, and instructions for converting a standard (and cheap and readily available) Marlin .22 calibre rifle into a "poor man's MP-5" capable of firing 1500 rounds a minute. Without attempting the project myself, it's hard to say how feasible it is. It does look to be considerably more difficult than their ads claim, though. You won't be putting one together while the Feds are breaking down your door, that's for sure. The practicality of this homemade submachine gun is also questionable. The book advises you not to put a clip in until your ready to start firing as a jolt or impact could engage the firing pin and discharge the entire clip. Speaking of, at 1500 rounds per minute, you would empty a 30 round clip in .04 seconds! And what the hell good would that do you? I suppose publications like this which shed some light on the inner workings of firearms will be good to keep around if the revolution ever makes it off the college campuses and into the real world, but I think I'll just get an AR-15 while I still can. —FC

Paladin Press, P.O. Box 1307, Boulder, Colorado 80306

Reading ZINE REVIEWS

LONELY VIDEO REVIEW

Subhumans "Next Time Round" video: The last concert video I saw was Guns n Roses (don't ask, please), but this is a totally different animal. Certainly it has nothing to match those glossy close-ups of Axl's short-shorts-encased legs. (That's a good thing, by the way.) The image and sound can both be a little rough (and the funny accents don't help, of course), but the video has energy. Jon, the man with the cam, is right to warn you to take an intermission, however: the video is 2 hours long, which can start to drag without a break. It follows the Subhumans through several shows during their 1998 tour of the United States. Besides footage of 28 songs, it includes conversations with the band that answer some basic questions, and also explanations of some of the songs. The whole thing is accompanied by a cute little booklet that includes lyrics for all of the songs (except "Happy Birthday," which you should know already). The Subhumans continue to amaze me because they were such an intelligent, super-politicized band, especially considering the era of punk rock they were coming out of, and because even now, after a long sabbatical and a little bit of aging, they aren't afraid to try again. Dick says at one point, "Punk can be a mature outlook on whatever," and it's exciting to have the Subhumans back again, even for a short time, to provide an example of that. Punk can be really discouraging when all the older, more mature people who might provide some inspiration and guidance keep "graduating" to careers and real life and other depressing institutions like that. Maybe if there were more older people showing us that punk rock is a sustainable lifestyle, the community would be able to work more effectively toward world revolution or whatever it is that we collectively desire. Perhaps that's the idea we should all bring away from this video. Or maybe we should just keep in mind Pete the roadie's advice: "Always make friends with the big kids who hate Nazi skinheads." —@ Alternative to Industries Productions, c/o Jon Foy, 5023 Cedar Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19143 (\$10 ppd)

STEEPLESSNESS AND STRUGGLE: the process behind the creation of Inside Front

Editor D asked me to make good use of any leftover space in the review section, so I thought I'd use a few lines to document my experiences with the Cincinnati-based band. When Earthmover toured with what goes on behind the pseudonym. . . .

Brian suggested I use any remaining odd space at the end of the reviews to talk a bit about one of my main projects, my record label (+/- Records). I've been laying low for a few months, finishing up my degree, but I will be very busy this summer (and presumably from now on; with no job and no school, it's all punk all the time). First up, we're finally sending in the Dead.Eyes.Under cd to be pressed in the full packaging. After numerous problems it will definitely be worth the wait. We are also repressing the Next2Nothing 7" which was released as a cooperative project between the band and the label (as are many of our releases). In the immediate future, we need to have the Bloodpact / Varsity 12" out in time for the bands to tour together from July 1st to July 12th. Both are fast edge bands from Michigan, Varsity are positive while Bloodpact are a bit more Negative (get it? haha. eh, fuck you). After that we will be rereleasing the Trial Foundation ep with all sorts of bonus material, the highlight of which is a commercial radio interview with Greg and Timm which is pretty fucking inspiring, to say the least. The Earthmover "Themes" 10" and CD will be repressed eventually as well. The CD might have all the demo and comp tracks, we'll see. Bloodpact might tag along with Extinction for part of their European tour. The Extinction 10" is approaching the anniversary of its recording date without seeing the light of a real release due to innumerable layout difficulties. Someday, we promise. Yes, Earthmover broke up. Members are in Full Assault, Bloodpact, and Walls of Jericho, and we have projects of varying degrees of secrecy in the works with each band. Anyway, here is what we have available right now. We like to trade with other labels and we help CrimethInc. and Element out with trading a bit as well and have an extensive distro list you can see on our website. Get in touch and we'll try to work something out. We might be a little slow with the mail as we continue finishing school and then traveling for the remainder of the summer, but we will get back to you eventually, promise. thanks.

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HODGEPODGE

Issue 4 out now with articles on Dioxin pollution, and Shell Oil's involvement in Nigeria. Interviews with Los Crudos, Alex Dunham (Hoover), Jason Farrell (Bluetip), and Metroschifter. Plus the usual editorials, columns, book, zine, and music reviews. 64 pages. Issue 5 out in January.. tentatively with 400 years, Tony Cadena (Adolescents, ADZ), Ramona Africa, and Kaia (Team Dresch). Articles on volunteering in Mexico, the privatization of education, and much much more! Distributors get in touch!

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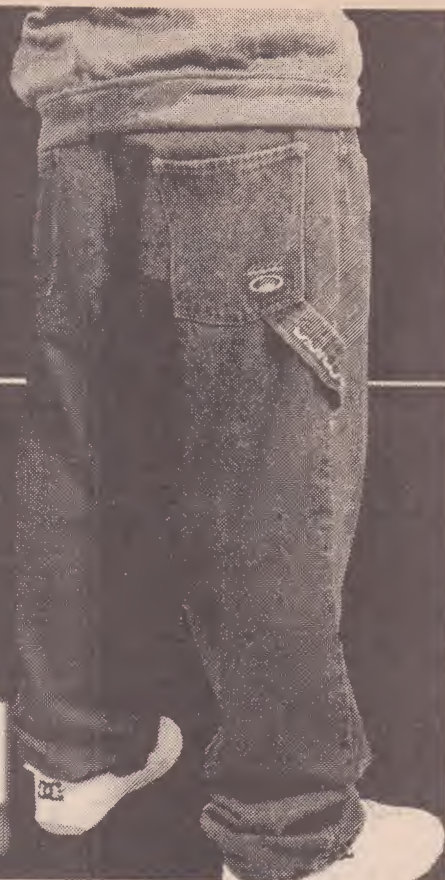
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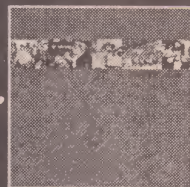


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T-Shirts! "I don't need god,"

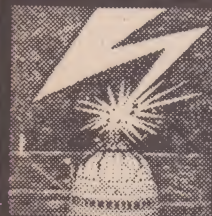
"Unabomber: A Real American Hero," "This one screams your name rich man" (with bullet graphic), or new Slave logo (with heart graphic). \$6 ppd usa/\$8 world (wholesale \$5 each)





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YOU ARE A TARGET AUDIENCE

Youth is a time when you should be reevaluating the assumptions and traditions of older generations, when you should be willing to set yourself apart from those who have come before and create an identity of your own.

But in our society, "youthful rebellion" has become a ritual: every generation is expected to revolt against the social order for a few years, before "growing up" and "accepting reality." This negates any power for real change that the fresh perspective of youth could have; for now rebellion is "just for kids," and no young person dares to maintain their resistance into adulthood for fear of being thought of as childish.

This arrangement is very much to the advantage of certain corporations who depend on the "youth market." Where is your money going when you buy that compact disc, that chain wallet, that hair dye, leather jacket, wall hanging, all those other accessories that identify you as a rebellious young person? Right to the companies that make up the order you want to stand against. They cash in on your rebellious impulses by selling you symbols of rebellion that actually just keep the wheels turning. You keep their pockets full, and they keep yours empty; they keep you powerless, busy just trying to afford to fit the molds they set for you.

CrimethInc.

"The opium of a new generation."



Would you like to pay by personal check, or credit card? Money order, cash up front, put it on lay-away, financing and no money down? Automatic withdrawals to pay off the bank loans, college loans, Visa and Mastercard debts, State and Federal taxes, rent and food and health "care" they call it, a thousand banalities that keep you running like a hamster in a wheel between the classroom and the summer job and the marriage altar, the freeway and the office and the corporate golf course meeting? Death on the installment plan, or all at once like a stockbroker mid-life crisis suicide on the next Black Monday?

Or would you really like something else, something altogether different? Would you like to not pay at all, to never pay again for land and food and even water? 100% off, everything MUST go! Have you ever had dreams in which everything was free, and you could eat what you wanted and go what you wanted and do what you wanted? Have you ever wanted to have enough that you could share freely with everyone else, without worrying about spending your resources "efficiently" and "responsibly" and "properly"? Ever wanted to quit being "responsible" for one moment and just do what your heart demands?

Are you suspicious of who benefits from your work, your entertainment, your boredom, your *despair*? Do you think everyone has equal control over this world? Would you like to have your share?

What "insurance" could you buy that would keep you safer than living in a world where people actually cared about each other?

Perhaps you should find yourself some like-minded friends, stop talking about how bad traffic was and start discussing *tactics*. Or swear to yourself that you will never, ever again do anything but chase your wildest dreams, every moment of your life. Or buy yourself a liter of gasoline and a bottle. It could be your last purchase ever.

A sepia-toned photograph of a cloudy sky over a dark, silhouetted horizon. The clouds are scattered and vary in density, with some appearing as bright, wispy streaks against a darker background. The horizon line is dark and indistinct, suggesting a landscape or sea at night or in low light. The overall tone is somber and atmospheric.

Anarchy.

Once you've tried it,
nothing else compares.

Inside Front #12

This magazine and 6" record are available from the CrimethInc. address for \$4 postage paid inside the U.S.A. and \$5 outside of it. Wholesale rates (\$3 USA/\$4 world) are available if you order a few copies. We depend on grass roots, do-it-yourself independent distribution, of course, so help if you can. Never ever make a check out to "Inside Front" or "CrimethInc." Leave them blank and hide them well.

There is a CrimethInc. webpage, organized and executed on free library computers by a homeless punk kid, if you want to read more of our ideas or track down other information about our projects. The address is included below. However, we'd much rather you write to us personally. You may have to wait a little while for a response, since our lives are increasingly chaotic and unpredictable, but we'd much rather be in real-life three-dimensional contact with you, even just in the form of a letter, than just have you look passively at our stuff in cyberspace.

For this project, the CrimethInc. Workers' Collective included a whole bunch of people who will not be identified here for various reasons. What are you, a fucking cop?

Inside Front #13 will be released at the beginning of the year 2000, to coincide with the massive economic, social, and political upheavals that hopefully will result from computer problems come New Year's Day. If those upheavals don't arise from computer problems, this issue will be there to bring them on. It will include a CD compilation of new hardcore bands, and the usual Inside Front stuff, plus some not-so-usual stuff. Please feel free to send music and reading material for review, letters to the editor, etc. to us for it.

A list of other CrimethInc. projects and commodities can be found in the first few pages of this 'zine. If you want to circumvent the (sometimes slow) CrimethInc. mailorder, or you want to do trades, write to:

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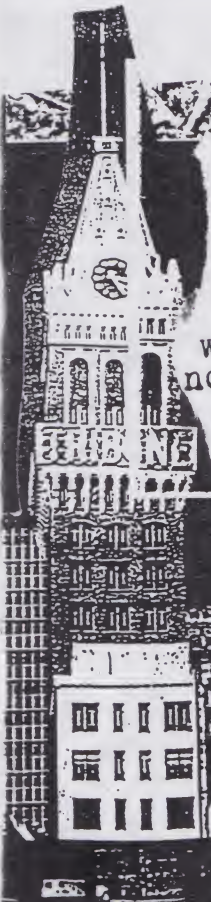


finland



BOMB THREAT

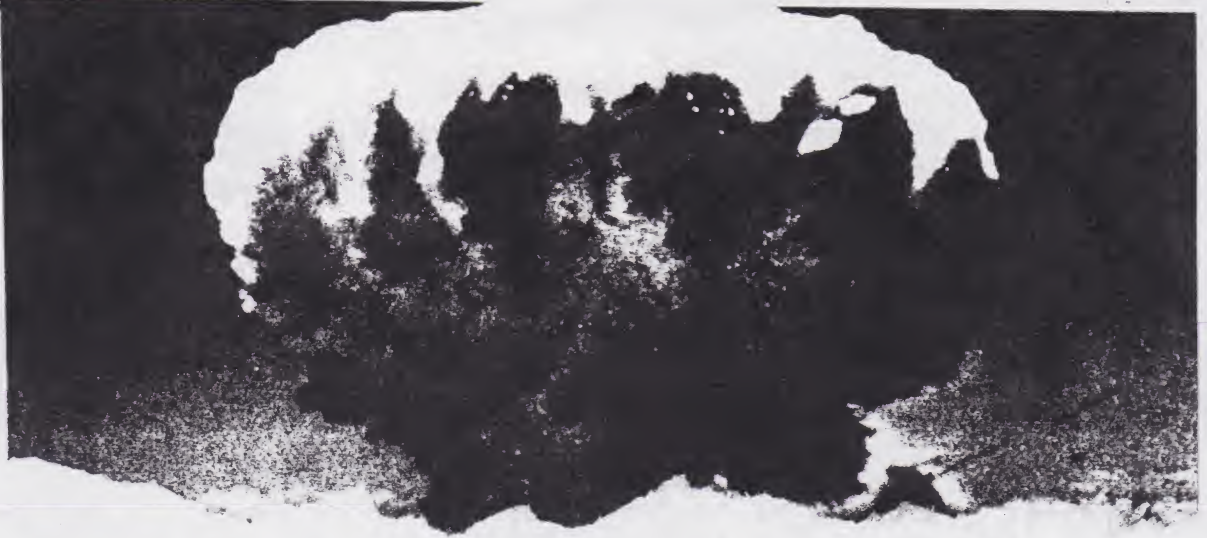
Last Friday there was a bomb threat
at the bank downtown and all the clerks
got to come out of their cages and into
the sun for a few hours.



Don't be taken in by their so-called "human condition"
all these chains can only restrain us if we accept them
tied to your security, nailed to your routines
take heed of your desires, live out your dreams, and
kill everyone that you can
life belongs to those who dare to seize it
we'll take all we can get, give and receive it
with no one above, and no one below
nothing too great, and nothing too low
so fuck anyone that you can
steal anything that you can
fuck everybody
stay ALIVE any fucking way you can

stay alive any way that you can. not merely "alive" according to medical terminal-logy, but ALIVE, overflowing with the kind of energy that Henry Miller wrote about: the invisible forces of desire that invest an otherwise empty and valueless world with meaning. dare to go to whatever lengths you must to keep life meaningful to you, to keep it fresh and vital, to escape the inertia of drab everyday existence. isn't a moment of purity, of honesty with yourself about your most fundamental desires, worth more than a lifetime of their stifling propriety, their sterile sobriety, their sanctimonious lies? sometimes, in order to reestablish contact with the self, with the id which has been buried beneath the shackles and sublimations of socialization, it is necessary to break taboos and test old limits—to break out of the ideological and emotional cages we build for ourselves. those of you who know what it means to truly feel alive, who know that nothing is sacred if not the feeling of passion pounding in your veins, will understand this song.





NUCLEAR ANNIHILATION

nuclear annihilation
mass irradiation
lots of other bad shit
now we're fucking dead



in the second world war, we created weapons capable of destroying hundreds of thousands of people in one blow—and we used them, too. in hiroshima and nagasaki we turned men to dust, we burned the skin off of teenage girls so that maggots grew in their crippled living bodies, we gave grandmothers and babies radiation sickness. now, at the end of the twentieth century, we have thousands of times the murderous capabilities we had then; but, desensitized by decades spent on the brink of annihilation, we have completely forgotten just how close it is. thermonuclear war crouches in the shadows, in the ready missile silos, always with us, biding its time until we least expect it...



BRAVE NEW WORLD ORDER

this so-called innocence that you fetishize
is that all there is to life in your eyes?

and I'm not convinced that's what's right for you
is right for fucking me

I'm told my rights end where another's rights begin
but with our lives all interconnected, how can you
draw the line?

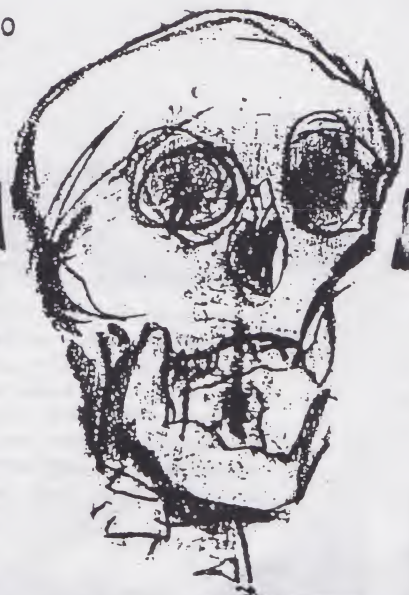
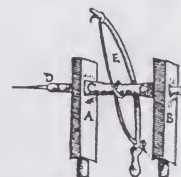
your value system--does it hold up to scrutiny?

I may want what you want

but I think your methods and motives are fucking
childish bullshit

so I am told my rights end where another's rights begin
but you've got no right to judge for me
and I'm drawing the fucking line

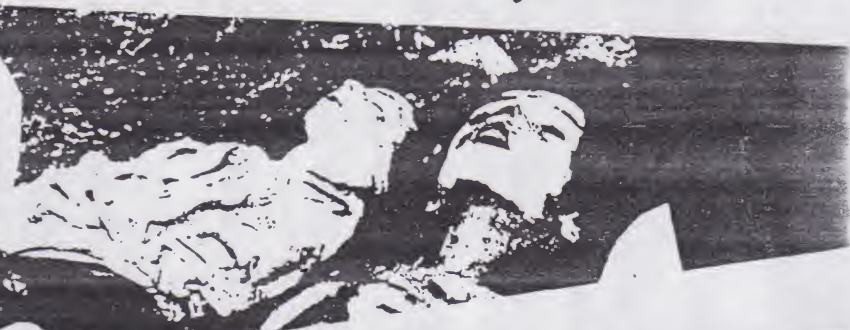
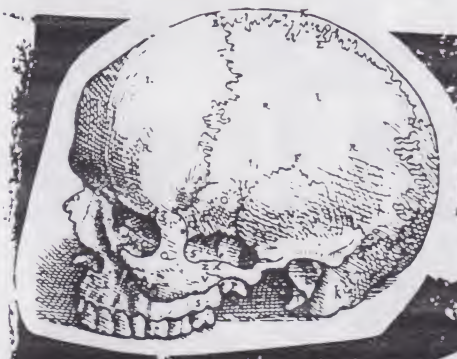
"deep in the heart of man, the prohibition to
kill another being...break down the rest, if
your ~~RESPECT~~ respect for life still has to
be a conquest." -TIMEBOMB, ITALY -



does your "respect for life" still have to be a conquest? is it perhaps just another route to domination over others, a means of placing yourself in a position of righteousness and power, rather than a departure from the system of power and hierarchy? do you still talk about "sin" and "innocence" and "evil" when you speak out against oppression and exploitation, do you talk about a new world order that you and your fellow holy warriors will establish? as long as we still languish under the "world order" of some group, "compassionate" and "respectful" or not, we cannot be free or equal. look at yourself, your values, and the motives for your struggle: are you ready to relinquish power, to let others be what they are, to refuse your position of privilege and coercive authority? or is your revolution really just another attempt to set up your morality over everyone else as the new law? even as we attempt to fight their system, we often replicate it in our own efforts. let's leave conquest and domination of others behind. no gods, no masters!

INTIFADA

When you have robbed a man of everything
he is no longer in your power, he is free again.
-aleksandr solzenhitsyn



ümlaut resolutely supports the people of occupied palestine (and, for that matter, the
EZLN) in their desperate struggle against the heartless forces of western imperialism.



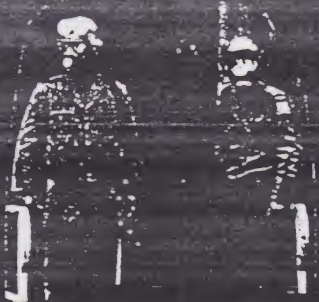


Gas Chamber of Commerce

N 01

29

998



do not misunderstand us—it is not the citizens of the united states themselves who are the problem. it is, rather, the concentration of so much economic, political, and cultural power in the hands of one nation—especially this particular nation, which is so economically brutal, so politically manipulative, and so culturally bankrupt. the end of the cold war left the united states as the only world superpower, and as such they exert a standardizing force over the rest of the world that has not been rivaled throughout history. we must resist the american nightmare, we must fight against it to the death—or be content to live forever in [fast food] chains of plastic and neon.

U.S. OUT OF NORTH AMERICA
estados unidos
pais de bandidos
culturas destruidas
chinos asesinos
FUCK YOU

U.S. OUT OF
NORTH
AMERICA

EVE OF DESTRUCTION

corporate cancer spreads across the earth
technological nightmare, no return

objectification

dehumanization

a dead generation nears extermination

unbridled consumption

fuels overproduction

constriction, constriction

eve of destruction

garbage pours into the sea and sky

overpopulation

state subjugation

and mining resources for exploitation

token reductions

unheeded instructions

system malfunction

eve of destruction



HERE COME THE PIGS

you stole those shoes and stole that bread
and stole those books you hadn't read, jacked
up cash and coke machines, pay phones and a
thousand other schemes, paid no rent or income tax,
might that you'd slip through the cracks and now...
here come the pigs.

"if it's you against the world, bet on the world." attributed to franz kafka.

remember that the system is stronger than you, smarter than you, older and wiser
and more far reaching than you. any attempts to live outside of its morals and laws
will be met with the utmost resistance. good luck—as the reggae song says, stay out
of reach.

"I despise the foul stench of mustache that precedes the boys in blue." attributed to
nausea.

in these days of worldwide corporate destruction and exploitation, you cannot buy
products in the marketplace with a clean conscience if you care about your fellow
human beings, animals, or the environment. you have to be a thief to be an honest
man. but, well aware of our outrage at their crimes and an almost universal
dissatisfaction with the vicissitudes of their greed-driven capitalist system, these
corporations are continually improving their security measures—so that one day we
will be forced to either participate in their slaughter and oppression, or be captured
and destroyed. the primary force they bring to bear against us in this campaign is
that of state power: the legal system, which is enforced from day to day by police
officers. these motherfuckers may once have been human beings with human
hearts; but the system forced them to accept the repugnant role of legal enforcers in
order to satisfy the needs for financial gain and hierarchical power which it has
conditioned them to feel. clad in uniform, acting as the faceless representatives of
impersonal, disinterested authority, supporting a system that would destroy us all,
these unfortunates hardly seem human any longer. remember that they are really no
better off than we... but be willing to fight them whenever necessary, when you can,
while you can.

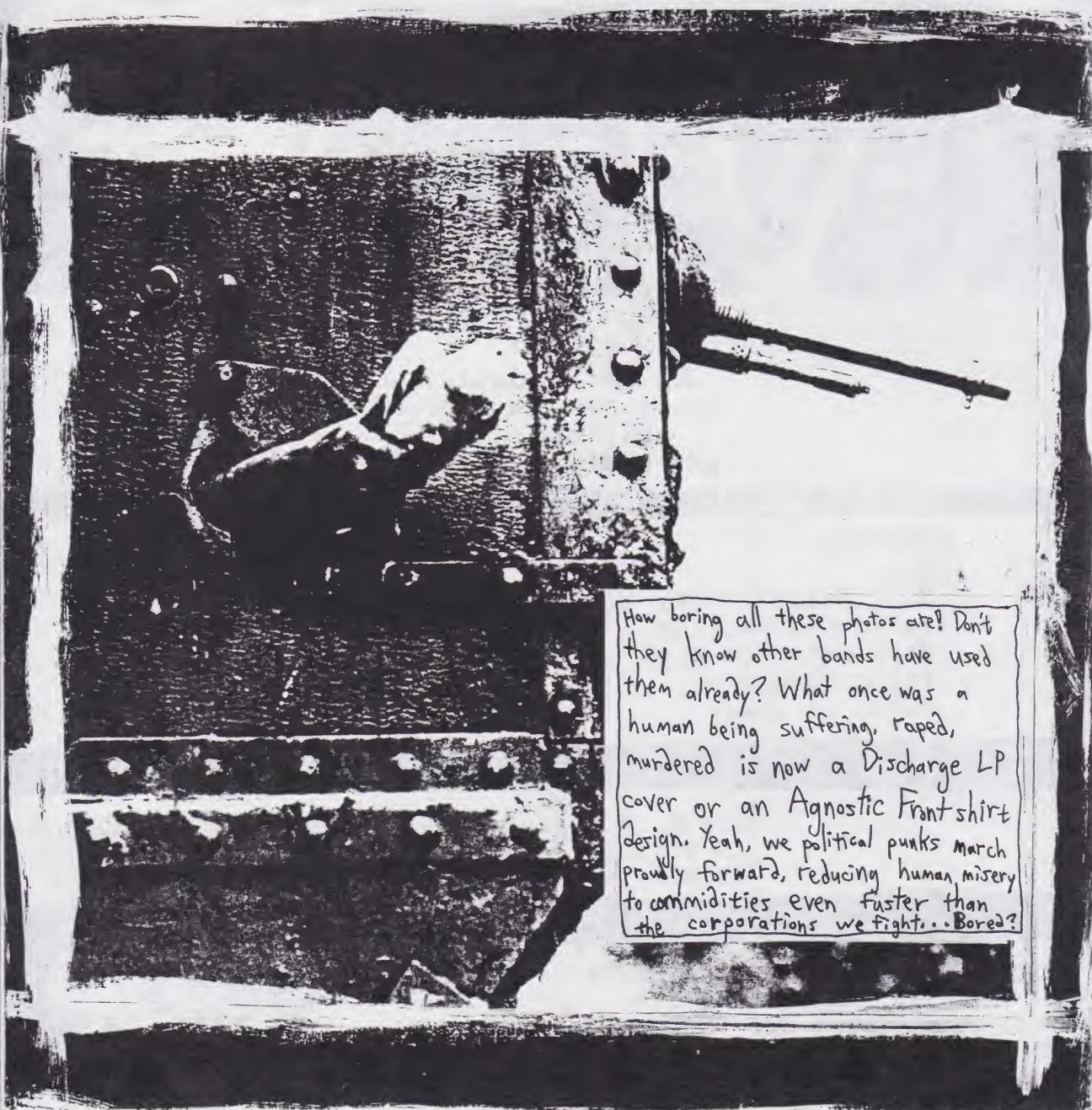


BRING THEM DOWN
(originally performed by the bad brains)

this is our rendition of the twenty-first
second of the bad brains' "joshua's song";
a timeless anthem against monumental power
in all its manifestations.



PAINT IT BLACK
(originally performed by carcass)



How boring all these photos are! Don't they know other bands have used them already? What once was a human being suffering, raped, murdered is now a Discharge LP cover or an Agnostic Front shirt design. Yeah, we political punks march proudly forward, reducing human misery to commodities even faster than the corporations we fight... Bored?



SIDE ONE
bomb threat
nuclear annihilation
brave new world order
intifada
gas chamber of commerce

SIDE TWO
intro
U.S. out of north america
eve of destruction
here come the pigs
bring them down
paint it black

ümlaut is a transient band and can be found
in various squats and shelters throughout
Finland. Contact them through Crimethino:

CrimethInc. International Workers Conspiracy
2695 Rangewood Drive
Atlanta, GA. 30345
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ümmlaut-finland's finest:
smedvig robråŕ > vocāls

uif k̄a as > guitārs

mærlē k̄a as > guitārs

Bārōn búŕŕi vōn bl̄ixēŋ > drums, vocāls

Bārōm æŕrik vōn bl̄ixēŋ > bāss, vocāls

recorded live in the stüdlō, norway, on independence dāy, two years before the turn of
the millennium, at Valhalla sound, helsinki. ümmlaut utilize bulgarian firearms, soviet
"guerilla" amps, and big, dirty, stolen motorcycles.

cheers! naðja (crimethinc), red ānā (læýh), andreas baader and gudrun ensslin
(lovers forever!), holger meins (you set an example for ús all and won't be forgotten),
the amebix (live to ride, ride to live), hell's angels eastern europe (bulgarian bike
rock'ers), iron horse root beer(!), i.e., hārblinger tabloid, paul maul artist group,
maximum rock and roll.

insert composed by crimethinc, summer
commando, while listening to the subhumans
"religious wars" 7" and the motörhead "live in
helsinki" 10" bootleg, song explanations cowritten
with .b diablo d.